



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
July 10 – 17, 2014

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Nunavut Day celebrations look at past, present, future of Inuit

'I think this year will be remembered,' says NTI President Cathy Towtongie

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 09, 2015 9:32 AM CT Last Updated: Jul 09, 2015 11:23 AM CT



Nunavut leaders pose with Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, front left, in Iqaluit May 4, 2015, after signing a settlement agreement in NTI's lawsuit against the Government of Canada. NTI President Cathy Towtongie says 'this year will be remembered.' (Jordan Konek/CBC)

Nunavut Inuit leaders have a message to residents this Nunavut Day: be proud of an accomplishment envied by aboriginal groups around the world.

July 9 commemorates the passing of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the Nunavut Act, which laid the groundwork for the territory's eventual separation from the Northwest Territories.

"It's an incredible accomplishment and this is admired internationally," said Cathy Towtongie, the president of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the territorial land claim organization.

"Around the world a lot of aboriginal groups have not changed the map of their country. We have."

Towtongie says this is "a very happy day for each individual in Nunavut," but while Inuit celebrate the past and the present, they should be looking to the future.

"I think this year will be remembered, because we are moving forward in a renewed relationship with the Government of Canada and the Government of Nunavut," she said.

This year, NTI signed a \$255-million settlement with the Government of Canada, in their lawsuit over the implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

The federal and territorial governments will work with NTI on training and education programs that will be funded using the settlement money.

"We look forward to working with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. on that settlement," said Deputy Premier Monica Ell, who will represent the territorial government at events in the capital today.

"We'll reflect on what we've done in the past and what we hope to do in the future."

Celebrations of Inuit culture, music in Iqaluit

Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. is hosting its annual Nunavut Day celebrations in Iqaluit with a day of live music, barbeques and contests.

"This year we are going to look forward instead of clinging to the past," said Towtongie who will welcome residents at noon today at Inuksuk High School, along with Ell and Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq.



People packed the Cadet Hall today for the Nunavut Arts & Crafts Association's annual Nunavut Day show and sale. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

Despite some rainy weather and fog, people in Iqaluit crowded morning events in the capital.

While many events changed locations to be held indoors, employees from the First Nations Bank of Canada braved the rain to hand out hundreds of free slices of cake.

An arts and crafts show and sale by the Nunavut Arts & Crafts Association got underway at 11 a.m. and the CBC's Jordan Konek says the Cadet Hall has been packed. It's set to wrap up at 4 p.m.

The main event, now moved inside to the high school, has seen a steady stream of people since noon, with long lines for the yearly free barbecue.

There will be also be games and musical performances by Daniel Kolola, Kamaalukutaat, and The Trade-offs.

At 2:15 p.m., there will be a seal skinning and duck plucking contest.

The Inuktitut Film Festival is also back for another year, with free screenings at 7 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. at the Astro Theatre.

The [CBC Nunavut](#) Facebook page will have live updates throughout the day.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavut-day-celebrations-look-at-past-present-future-of-inuit-1.3144552>

Haana-SikSik, Inuk fashion designer, brings her designs home

Artist says her modern clothing is inspired by traditional Inuit art

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 10, 2015 6:11 AM CT Last Updated: Jul 10, 2015 9:24 AM CT



Fashion designer Melodie Haana-SikSik Lavallée took her hobby of sewing and made it into a career. (Sima Sahar Zerehi)

Inuk fashion designer Melodie Haana-SikSik Lavallée — whose bold modern designs are inspired by elements of traditional Inuit art and fashion — has taken her hobby of sewing and made it into a career.

Her latest collection, called "Nuliajuk's Closet," is named after the Inuit sea goddess who controls ocean life. She says it was Nuliajuk's strength, resilience and reputed beauty that captured her imagination.

In this collection, Lavallée, who works by the name Haana-SikSik, imagines the goddess moving through the ages, with pieces that borrow design elements from various epochs.

Her eclectic collection includes Victorian gowns and bustiers to flapper-inspired dresses and 60s-inspired suits. These designs incorporate elements of traditional clothing and fabrics in new and innovative ways, combining bold colourful satin fabrics with seal-skin collars and trims.

"People are surprised when they see my work because I take something like sealskin that's harder to work with and turn it into delicate clothing," says Haana-SikSik.



Clothing from Haana-SikSik's new line, Nuliajuk's Closet, was unveiled at a recent fashion show. (W. Carolan Photography and CEO studios)

She sees her designs as a bridge between the past and present of Inuit culture.

"I think that it's very important that we progress. Inuit are known to be extremely adaptable and we're also said to be one of the cultures that went from Igloo to the Internet in one generation, and I think that shows just how adaptable we are."

Haana-SikSik taught herself how to sew at the age of 20. "At that point I was only making parkas and wind pants and things like that," she says.

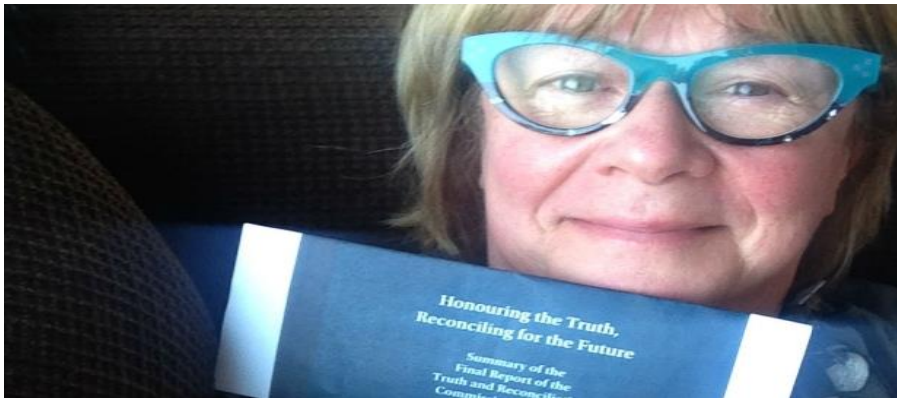
After spending two years completing studies in fashion design in Fredericton, Haana-SikSik is now back home in Iqaluit. She is now in the process of making her new designs available for sale [on her website](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/haana-siksik-inuk-fashion-designer-brings-her-designs-home-1.3146123>

Indigenous summer reading: 3 top picks by Shelagh Rogers

Next Chapter's host lets us in on her 'must reads' for the summer season

By Shelagh Rogers, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 09, 2015 7:00 PM ET Last Updated: Jul 09, 2015 7:00 PM ET



Shelagh Rogers and her summer reading recommendations. (Shelagh Rogers)

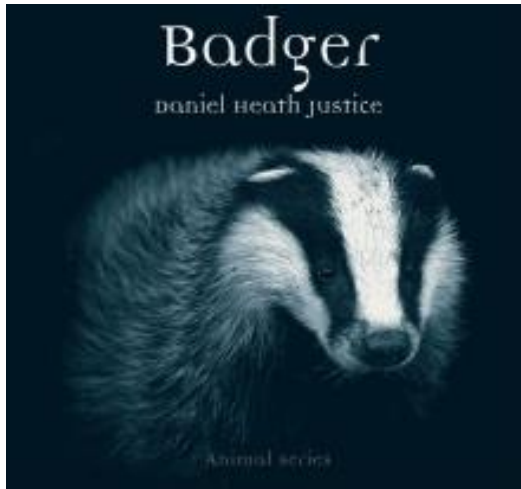
CBC Aboriginal asked some of our favourite people to recommend some holiday reading suggestions.

In this on-going summer series authors, celebrities and CBC personalities share their favourite books, the ones they want to read this summer and the ones they think everyone should read.

Here now is *The Next Chapter's* Shelagh Rogers to kick it.

To read this summer: *Badger* by Daniel Heath Justice

I think this will be a most playful read. This book by Daniel Heath Justice (the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Literature and Expressive Culture at UBC) is part of a natural history series, examining the role a specific animal plays in nature and in culture.



Badger, by Daniel Heath Justice, is part of a natural history series, examining the role a specific animal plays in nature and in culture. (Reaktion Books)

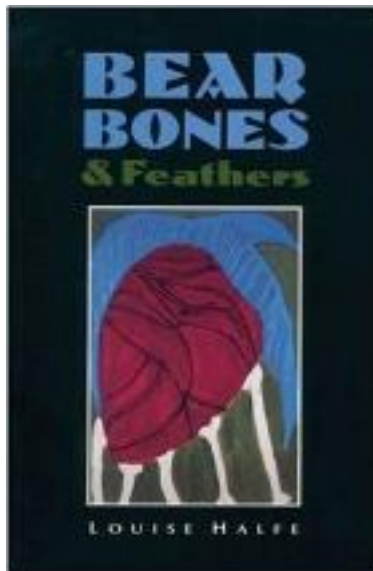
I have been leafing through it and I keep hearing the refrain from "Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" by (ahem) The Animals. It is both, as Daniel says, "ennobled paragon and feral brute."

My first badger was Mr. Badger in *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame. Daniel writes "Badger is the voice of history, tradition and the power of the land itself."

I can't wait to read about the badger through page and screen. The book is richly illustrated (which I appreciate for a summer read) with photographs, cartoons, reproductions of paintings — from Japanese woodblock prints, to the paintings of Alan Syliboy to Bryan Talbot's badger inspector, hero of the graphic novel *Grandville*. In short, it looks like a lot of fun. Deep fun.

A fave: *Bear Bones and Feathers* by Louise Halfe

This collection of poems was published in 1994. I remember talking about this book with my producer Richard Handler in advance of her coming into our studio for an interview on *The Arts Tonight*. We were blown away by her guts, her strength, her unflinching gaze.



Louise is a witness, not only to her life but also the life of her parents. She honours their story.

This book is full of blood and bruises. It's visceral.

My overwhelming sense as I come away from the book is one of strength and power — Louise's, her family's, her people's.

Louise inscribed the book for me with these words "There must be a little spilled blood in every story if it's to carry the medicine." Carry the medicine she does. The writing is that good.

A recommendation: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future

When the chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Justice Murray Sinclair, delivered the executive summary of the TRC's final report, he said: "We have described for you a mountain. We have shown you a path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing."

As an honorary witness to the TRC, I was in that ballroom at the Delta Hotel in Ottawa on June 2nd when he uttered those words. I felt directly called to climb and part of that call is reading the summary of the final report, called Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future.

It lays out the origin, the history and the legacy of the residential school era, precisely how Canada has arrived at the present moment where there are so many wrongs to right.



Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chair Justice Murray Sinclair speaks during the Grand entry ceremony during the second day of closing events for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Ottawa, June 1, 2015. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

I wrote in my journal how Justice Sinclair framed the recommendations: not as a national penance, but rather as a second chance at establishing a relationship of equals.

The summary is animated throughout by excerpts from the statements of survivors and others who presented at the seven national events held throughout the life of the commission. It is not like reading a report. It is an essential narrative of the "honest history" (to quote from the summary) of Canada.

If reading seems to daunting, there is a brilliant initiative on twitter, #ReadtheTRCReport, instigated byJoey Flowers, Zoe Todd and Erica Violet Lee where people are reading the report and uploading it to Youtube.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/indigenous-summer-reading-3-top-picks-by-shelagh-rogers-1.3136425>

Nunavut performer combines two cultures on debut release

“Growing up I didn’t really identify as anything”

THOMAS ROHNER, July 10, 2015 - 1:30 pm



Kathleen Ivaluarjuk Merritt poses for a picture posted to Facebook on May 29. The Rankin Inlet musician draws on both her Inuit and Irish heritage for her debut album, called, "Ivaluarjuk: Ice, Lines and Sealskin." (FACEBOOK PHOTO)



Kathleen Ivaluarjuk Merritt will release her debut album, with this cover art, at the Yellowknife Folk on the Rocks festival July 17. (ART BY KYLE SHEURMANN)

Growing up in Rankin Inlet with mixed Inuit and Irish ancestry, musician Kathleen Ivaluarjuk Merritt found herself belonging to two cultures without wanting to belong to either.

That's because at times Merritt didn't feel Inuk enough, and at other times she didn't feel her Cape Breton heritage made her Irish enough.

"Growing up I didn't really identify as anything," said Merritt, who is currently fundraising online to launch her debut album.

"When you're a young child, and you're told you are something, that you have to be something, you just don't want to be. I was also very rebellious."

Caught between two cultures and rebelling against both, Merritt found herself in a cultureless space — something she says other Nunavummiut know about.

"It's a very real challenge that a lot of young Inuit face today, who have both cultures embedded in them."

But now the 27-year-old musician says she's overcome emotional challenges to embrace both heritages and draw on both cultures for her debut album: "Ivaluarjuk: Ice, Lines and Sealskin."

"There'll always be people who make you feel one way or another, but it's really up to you to know who you are, to feel confident enough in what you do, to really believe in yourself," Merritt said.

That confidence can be heard in a pre-released song from her imminent album debut — a beautiful track called "Love Song," which features throat singing, spoken word, landscape sounds and melodic guitar strumming that conjures images of a Cape Breton seascape.

Merritt collaborated with a dozen Nunavut musicians, including the Jerry Cans, for her album, which is set to launch at Yellowknife's Folk on the Rocks festival July 17.

Merritt started a \$2,500 online fundraising campaign about a month ago to help cover the \$30,000 she said it costs to make an album almost entirely in Nunavut.

To date, she's raised about 70 per cent of that through the online Indiegogo fundraiser, which ends July 12.

But the album has been a long time coming, mirroring her journey towards accepting first her Inuit identity and then her Irish one.

One of her earliest memories growing up in Rankin Inlet is of a young girl at the playground making fun of her for not being Inuk enough, Merritt said.

"I even had people close to me say, 'you're half Inuk, you're half Qallunaat.' I felt I was always being identified as that by others. So for a long time, especially through high school, I never wanted to identify as an Inuk."

That changed when Merritt attended the Nunavut Sivuniksavut program in Ottawa, where she learned about Inuit history, language and culture.

"I started really embracing the Inuk in me, and really appreciating things like patience, things that we have naturally growing up in this environment," Merritt said.

Travelling to different parts of the world after completing the NS program made Merritt more appreciative of her Nunavut roots too, the musician said.

Appreciating her Irish heritage took a bit longer, though.

Growing up, Merritt spent summers with family in Cape Breton, but it wasn't the same thing as seeing cousins from her mother's home community of Coral Harbour, for example.

“I have like a hundred cousins in Coral Harbour, and I’d see them year round,” Merritt said, laughing.

There was an eight-year stretch where Merritt said she didn’t visit her Cape Breton family at all.

“And then when I did, I got in shit from my aunt,” she laughed. “Now we’re in contact more often.”

And now Merritt embraces and identifies with both parts of herself.

“I’m learning as much as I can about both cultures now, and want to represent both equally,” Merritt said, but added that she feels closer to her Inuit roots, having grown up in Nunavut.

Despite all this internal exploration, Merritt said these days, she simply identifies as a human being.

“Often times I’ll hear from cab drivers, or other people, ‘Oh, your accent — you don’t sound Inuk. So what are you?’ I’ve gotten that question so many times: what are you?”

And how does Merritt answer that question?

“You know what, I’m a human being. That’s how I identify now.”

“For me it’s not about focusing on people who point things out. It’s about focusing on yourself and being able to be confident in how you identify,” Merritt said.

After the album launch in Yellowknife July 17, Merritt said she hopes to perform in a few Nunavut communities, including her hometown of Rankin Inlet and in Iqaluit.

You can donate to Merritt’s online fundraising campaign [here](#).

And you can listen to the pre-released track from that album [here](#).

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_performer_combines_two_cultures_on_debut_release/

New edition of Inuit memoir a moving, personal journey

Reviewed by: Faith Johnston

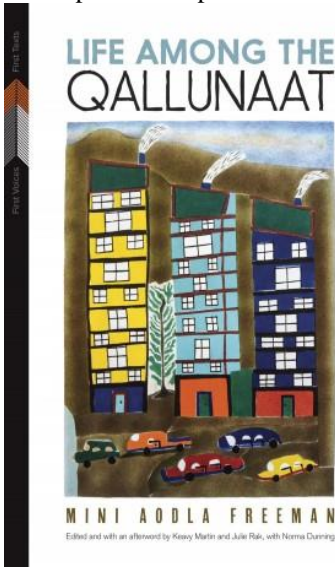
Posted: **07/11/2015 3:00 AM** | Last Modified: 07/11/2015 8:51 AM |

In 1957 Mini Aodla left her nomadic life as member of a small James Bay Inuit band to become a translator for the federal government in Ottawa. She was 20 years old; her only previous experience in the south had been a two-year stint in a Hamilton sanatorium.

She found riding through heavy traffic from the Ottawa airport terrifying and meeting all her new colleagues exhausting. Walking to work through crowds of "the saddest, most in-a-hurry, never smiling people" was a daily ordeal.



Aodla poses for a photo at her father's summer house at Old Factory River, Que., in 1959.



Fortunately Aodla's shock did not suppress her curiosity about the strange ways of the qallunaat (southerners). Twenty years later she wrote the first edition of *Life Among the Qallunaat*, published in 1978. Now the University of Manitoba Press, via their *First Voices, First Texts* series, has issued a new edition of the book that is truer to the author's original manuscript.

This fascinating memoir opens a new world to its readers. We experience Aodla's early days in Ottawa, navigating elevators, escalators and revolving doors for the first time, learning to live by the clock, hiding a gift of baby-doll pyjamas in her drawer because they were both too beautiful and too immodest to wear. The pyjamas reminded her of her first doll; her grandmother had pinned it to the wall of the tent, above the oil lamp, like an icon.

The cultural clash of life in Ottawa captures the reader's interest immediately, but it is the longer backstory of Aodla's childhood that is truly unforgettable. Every morning, no matter what the weather, she woke to the voice of her paternal grandmother urging her to "go out and look at the world." After a bowl of oatmeal, she shared the childhood chores of fetching water and wood with her brother. Their mother had died when they were very young, and their father often worked away, building and piloting boats.

The band spent winters on Cape Hope Island, where her maternal grandfather was band leader. It was his task to test the ice before the seal hunt could begin. Out he would walk - - warily at first, then with more confidence, until he was almost out of sight. In the spring, when the band returned from the goose hunt on another island, the ice was often so thin the dogs would race across without stopping.

Then came break-up, the only time adults could rest from labour. They would pay visits, sharing their dwindling supplies of oats, flour and tea. When the ice finally cleared they would shift to the mainland where they fished, renewed their supplies and traded with the Cree. Mini's grandmother was known for selling the best sealskin boots.

Mini's schooling was sporadic (the federal government did not take full responsibility for Inuit education until 1955). Early on she spent two years at a mission school in Moose Factory and later attended another mission school in Quebec. Although she always missed home when she was away, her loneliness was never incapacitating. Perhaps she benefitted from the love and wisdom of her grandmother and her father, as well as some of the people she met along the way.

During her second sojourn at the mission school in Quebec, Mini began to work in the infirmary and contracted tuberculosis. By this time she could speak English, French, Inuktitut and Cree. The Hamilton sanatorium used her as a translator for other patients.

Aodla is critical of the system that thrust Inuit into southern sanatoriums without providing any communications with families in the north, and of the annual visits her band received from "big qallunaat who came to count how many of us were left." In 1960 her own band was relocated and her people lost their occupations.

Aodla does not try to explain or simplify this tragic transitional era for northern Canadians. Her book is the story of a very personal journey, and it is a page-turner.

"Go out and look at the world" is the best advice Faith Johnston has heard in a long time (even for those of us with the luxury of indoor plumbing).

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/arts-and-life/entertainment/books/northern-perspective-313588141.html>

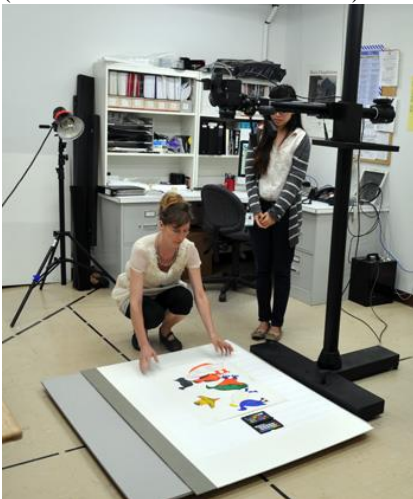
Pioneering Cape Dorset artworks enter the 21st century

More than 100,000 drawings and prints to be digitally preserved

SARAH ROGERS, July 13, 2015 - 6:00 am



Art archivists and researchers, from left, Richard Laurin, Maxine Veneracion and Elyse Portal stand down one aisle in an expansive vault in the basement of the McMichael art gallery just north of Toronto. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)



Curator Elyse Portal, left and arts student Maxine Veneracion, lay out a drawing — believed to have been done by the late Cape Dorset artist Joe Jaw — to be photographed and digitized. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)



A mother and her son try out one of three video games set up as part of the Journey Into Fantasy exhibit at the McMichael gallery July 8. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)

TORONTO — A piece of Cape Dorset’s cultural history lies in one of the most unlikely places.

The basement of Ontario’s McMichael Canadian Art Collection, just north of Toronto, holds a record of history that spans more than three decades.

Its expansive vault houses more than 100,000 drawings and prints, on long-term loan from the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in Cape Dorset.

The thousands of drawings are stacked in long boxes, separated by sheets of Mylar, and marked with the names of the co-op’s artists, many of them now departed — Lucy Qinnauyuak, Peter Pitseolak, Eleeshushe Parr and her famed artist husband, Parr, to name only a handful of the more than 100 artists represented there.

The collection is a snapshot of life around the Baffin community from the mid-1950s, when local artists first started producing work with the co-op, up until the late 1980s — a period that saw tremendous change for Inuit.

The drawings, etched in graphite, coloured pencils and felt ink, depict Arctic animals of every kind — wild and while being hunted — as well as the craggy Baffin landscape and early interactions between Inuit and Qallunaat and the new tools they introduced, such as boats and airplanes.

“It’s really a hidden history,” said Elyse Portal, curator and research assistant for the York University-based Mobilizing Inuit Cultural Heritage project or MICH.

“It’s a history that was produced for the public, but most people haven’t seen these. Often times, [artists] were asked to portray things they’d seen in their lives.”

The drawings arrived in Toronto on a chartered plane in March 1991, following an agreement between the McMichael and Terry Ryan, then the co-op’s general manager.

While fires had destroyed co-ops in both Sanikiluaq and Baker Lake in recent years — and their Inuit art collections along with them — Ryan wanted to find a place to safeguard Cape Dorset’s collection until a better venue could be built.

Almost 25 years later, that still hasn’t happened.

But as part of an initiative between the gallery and York University, it’s hoped each piece can be digitized and preserved as part of a database that will one day return to Nunavut, where the images were born.

The painstaking process of digitizing each image begins in another room in McMichael’s basement. That’s where a camera, set up on what looks like a miniature crane system, captures each image and sends it to a computer program for colour touch-ups before they are transformed into digital files.

Each piece is photographed four or five times, to ensure the whole piece is captured, along with any syllabics or text written on the page.

On a Wednesday afternoon, York University arts student Maxine Veneracion is working on digitizing pieces from what the group of archivists call a “problem box” — one containing pieces whose creators remain unknown or uncertain.

This particular drawing is covered in large colourful birds, filled in with felt tip pen. They speculate the drawing could have been penned by Joe Jaw, a well-known carver.

But as part of the digitization process, archivists will confer with elders and art experts to try to identify untitled pieces.

More than 4,000 pieces have already been digitized, including many of the works by Cape Dorset’s Pudloo Pudlat.

Some of those drawings now form the basis of the first-ever [interactive Inuit art exhibition](#) now on at the McMichael, called “Ingirrajut Isumaginnguaqtaminnut: Journey Into Fantasy.”

With the help of Nunavut game developer Pinnguaq, visitors to the exhibit can play three different video games, narrated in Inuktitut and using graphics animated from Pudlat’s prints.

In the often solemn space of a gallery setting, the exhibit’s iPads are an immediate draw for youngsters who pull on headphones and likely listen to their very first words of Inuktitut.

That’s just one example of what kinds of audiences the Cape Dorset collection can reach, once in digital form.

But for the archivists sifting through the thousands of drawings in the McMichael vault, the Cape Dorset collection offers unique access to the venerable pioneers of modern-day Inuit art.

Richard Laurin, the collection's archive assistant, says he's constantly impressed by what he sees.

"A lot of these pieces are pulled out of sketch books, but only a handful I've seen have eraser marks," he said. "They never seemed to try and negate it or make it disappear.

"That confidence in their work is really impressive."



A giant stone sculpture of a polar bear carved by Pauta Saila greets visitors to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection gallery outside of Toronto. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674breathing_new_life_into_cape_dorset_s_art/

Buffy Sainte-Marie inspires indigenous artists

Native music steps up on the world stage with artists like Sainte-Marie, Tanya Tagaq and a Tribe Called Red.



Buffy Sainte-Marie's latest album, *Power in the Blood*, has received rave reviews in a year when many native musicians are receiving exposure and broad acclaim.

By: [Trish Crawford](#) Music, Published on Sun Jul 12 2015

“Canada is waking up to its past misdeeds with aboriginal peoples and, as is often the case, it is the musicians and poets who are leading the way,” says Mervon Mehta, executive director of performing arts at the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Among them is Buffy Sainte-Marie, the Canadian-American Cree singer-songwriter born in Saskatchewan and raised in Massachusetts, who has been making music for more than five decades with more than a dozen albums to her name.

Her latest album, *Power in the Blood*, has received rave reviews and a spot on the long list for the [Polaris Music Prize](#), awarded to the best Canadian album of the year irrespective of genre.

It’s a noteworthy accomplishment in a year when many native musicians are receiving exposure and broad acclaim.

Last year’s winner of the \$50,000 Polaris Prize is Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq, who went on to have a banner year with performances at Luminato’s [Apocalypsis](#) and a set at Bonnaroo in June that [Rolling Stone](#) called “mesmerizing” and one of the best things about the Tennessee rock festival this year.

Power in the Blood is nominated for the Polaris this year alongside a compilation album — the first up for the prize — by indigenous performers.

In Toronto, two indigenous music festivals are scheduled this summer.

“I am not sure if there is an ‘explosion,’” says Mehta, who books hundreds of performers for the conservatory each year.

“But we have Tanya Tagaq and A Tribe Called Red making waves internationally over the past two or three years, coupled with Buffy’s new CD and tour, coupled with (activist

movement) Idle No More, coupled with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, coupled with the 1,000 missing and murdered aboriginal women.”

Indigenous music has taken a big, bold step on the world stage, says Andrew Hunter, curator of Canadian art at the Art Gallery of Ontario. He cites “politics, protest and voice” as signature elements of aboriginal music and the basis of its appeal.

Polaris Prize founder Steve Jordan agrees.

“I think it has a lot to do with more general awareness on aboriginal issues,” he says. “In the Polaris realm, it started when 2009 winner F---ed Up used their Polaris winnings to make an all-star record to bring awareness to missing aboriginal women.”

And the musical presence of indigenous artists extends beyond the stage.

“I invented pow wow rock,” says Sainte-Marie, who released her first album about 50 years ago. “There was less than no interest. One producer said Indian music sounded like screaming.”

Now native artists are “not just singing and songwriting, but engineers and producers, too. It’s exciting. We’ve always had festivals, but they’re bigger and better attended.”

Sainte-Marie joins one of the local festivals on July 31. She headlines the opening ceremony of Planet IndigenUS at the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts in Brantford. The festival runs for 10 days in Brantford and Toronto.

Its artistic director, Janis Monture, says the explosion in the numbers of aboriginal artists meant she had a wealth of talent from which to select the festival’s 300 artists, singers, writers and makers.

Rheanne Chartrand, artistic producer of the Aboriginal Pavilion at the Native Canadian Centre and a series of free concerts beginning July 16 at Fort York, says non-native audiences will be surprised at the breadth of genres.

“The biggest misconception is that all we do is traditional music. There’s electronic, reggae, dance hall. There is a diverse body of artists to choose from.”

At the forefront of this, she says, is Sainte-Marie, an inspiration for many.

Ottawa’s Tribe Called Red issued a remix of Sainte-Marie’s “Working for the Government” on July 4.

The band’s Bear Witness admits he was reluctant to mess with Sainte-Marie’s work until she gave her blessing.

“If you see her live show, you are blown away. She’s a rocker, with a high energy show with a band of young men. And just look at her body of work.” It includes Oscar winner “Up Where We Belong” from the movie *An Officer and a Gentleman* and the popular war protest song “Universal Soldier.”

Power in the Blood, recorded in Toronto, is the 74-year-old’s first album in more than six years.

“I only record when I feel I have something to say,” she says, having turned out four albums in 20 years.

For *Power* she chose three different producers — Michael Phillip Wojewoda, Jon Levine and Chris Birkett — who gravitated to producing the songs that they individually liked.

One song, “It’s My Way,” is a reworking of the tune on her very first album, released in 1964. She also revisits “Not the Lovin’ Kind” and “Generation,” written while she was blacklisted in the 1970s in the U.S. for her protest songs.

Living in Hawaii and travelling extensively around the world, Sainte-Marie says she’s noticed more grassroots organizations concerned about the issues of fairness, social equality and human rights.

“It’s like the ’60s, people are fed up and want change.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/stage/2015/07/12/buffy-sainte-marie-inspires-indigenous-artists.html>

Trial of Louis Riel returns for the summer

By Taylor Rattray, Leader-Post July 13, 2015



For the 48th consecutive summer, the city of Regina will be home to Rielco Productions’ Trial of Louis Riel.

REGINA — For the 48th consecutive summer, the city of Regina will be home to Rielco Productions’ Trial of Louis Riel.

Louis Riel was a Metis leader and the founder of Manitoba. In 1885, he was executed in Regina for his role in the Red River and North-West resistances. The Trial of Louis Riel is a theatre production based on those events.

The play, which starts Thursday, began in 1967, after the Regina Chamber of Commerce was commissioned by the city to come up with a project for Canada's centennial anniversary.

"They did a series of focus groups and the majority of their responses (said) the most important story that had taken place in Saskatchewan and in Regina in that 100 years was the trial of Louis Riel," said Peter Champagne, producer of the play.

The chamber contracted Irish playwright John Coutler to write a play based on the trial transcripts. It became an instant success and sold out playhouses for years.

"It was really a very popular tourist attraction and still is," said Champagne. "You get a pretty good snapshot of what was going on in 1885 and all the issues about race, culture, religion and land rights."

The play was originally performed at Government House, then moved to the MacKenzie Art Gallery in 1990. This year, it will be performed at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum (RSM). While the play has remained "pretty much the same," Champagne said people often return to the show every few years.

"We had a guy come last year who was actually in the show when it opened in 1967. He remembered it and was so struck by it that he brought his whole family back from Toronto last summer to see it. So, we get lots of that," he said.

Champagne estimated more than 100,000 people from all over the world have seen the production. He said he hopes the number will continue to grow as they near the 50th anniversary of the play.

"This is our history," said Champagne. "It's where we all come from. It's everybody's story in Canada, it's not just the story of the Metis."

Performances are at 7:30 p.m. July 16-18, July 23-25 and July 30-Aug. 1.

Tickets are available at the RSM and online at <http://www.rielcoproductions.com/schedule.htm>.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/entertainment/Trial+Louis+Riel+returns+summer/11211160/story.html>

Celebrating Aboriginal cuisine with recipes from Chef David Wolfman

By [Rita DeMontis](#), *Toronto Sun*

First posted: Wednesday, July 15, 2015 08:00 AM EDT



Chef David Wolfman serves up traditional aboriginal dishes to visitors for the Pan Am Games. (Handout)

When one is asked about Canadian cuisine, visions of sugar pie, bacon and maple syrup come to mind.

Ask award-winning Chef David Wolfman and he'll tell you it's about traditional Aboriginal cuisine -- foods indigenous to the country well before the first settlers arrived.

A member of the Xaxli'p First Nation in BC, Wolfman -- a classically trained chef, culinary arts professor at Ontario's famed George Brown culinary institute and host of his own TV series, *Cooking With The Wolfman* -- is an internationally recognized expert in wild game and traditional Aboriginal cuisine.

He's an enthusiastic educator when it comes to the fine art of cooking everything from elk, to moose to bush rabbit, to creating an elegant Gâteau St. Honore.

You cook with "care and understanding of where your food comes from," says Wolfman kindly. "In Aboriginal culture, when hunting game, it's understood the animal's sacrifice is revered ... We give thanks, we burn tobacco."

All food should be approached with the same principles, he added, during a recent interview, where he talked about the dishes he personally creates as "Aboriginal fusion - traditional foods presented with a modern twist."

Wolfman says he enjoys explaining and teaching the principles of aboriginal cuisine - "although I still get a kick when people ask me 'how do I get rid of the gamey taste?'"

"If beef cattle grazed in the wild, they would also have that gamey taste!" says Wolfman with a laugh.

Wolfman's passion is in teaching the traditions, and he does this through his work and with partnerships with various organizations. Just recently he partnered with the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation (MNCFN), the official Host First Nation of the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games.

They're spreading the love in a special 'You Are Welcom'e food truck that's currently travelling Toronto and inviting everyone to come sample authentic and local flavours.

"Food is universal and it brings people together from all different cultural backgrounds," says Chief Bryan LaForme, MNCFN. "We are honoured to officially welcome people to our traditional territory this summer and invite everyone to taste delicious Aboriginal dishes."

A variety of original and unique Aboriginal fusion recipes were created to celebrate First Nation culture, adds Wolfman. Here's a selection for those who can't make it out to the Pan Am/Parapan Am games - and "if you can't make it to the food truck, don't fret. All the recipes can be easily made in a home kitchen for a new food experience," says Wolfman.

Here's a selection of recipes courtesy of [Chef David Wolfman](#) for You Are Welcome Food Truck 2015.

Smoked Trout and Pontiac (Red) Potato Salad

Ingredients:

- 340 g (12 oz.) red potatoes (4 small or 2 medium)
- 1 tsp. (5 mL) Salt

Ingredients for Dressing:

- 3 Tbsp. (45 mL) white-wine vinegar
- 3 Tbsp. (45 mL) chopped fresh dill
- 2 Tbsp. (30 mL) extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. (30 mL) garlic, roasted and chopped
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) yogurt, plain Greek
- 1 tsp. (5 mL) Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp. (2.5 mL) freshly ground pepper
- 1/4 tsp. (1 mL) salt
- 900 g (31.7 oz) packed mixed greens

- 4 hard-boiled eggs, cut into wedges
- 8 grape tomatoes, cut lengthwise
- 4 oz. (113 g) smoked trout, skinned, boned and flaked
- 4 oz. (113 g) beet chips (see recipe)

Directions:

In a large pot cook potatoes in salted water for 10 – 12 minutes or until cooked; drain and let cool. In a stainless steel bowl mix white wine vinegar, dill, olive oil, garlic, yogurt, salt and pepper, mix well. Once potatoes are cool, slice into wedges and toss into dressing mixture, mix carefully without mashing potatoes. Add trout mix and stir. Put greens in serving bowl add egg wedges and tomatoes. Add a ladle of trout mixture. Serve in a bowl and garnish with some beet chips.

Makes 4 servings.

Beet Chips

Ingredients:

- 4 beets, medium sized, washed and dried well
- 8 cups (4L) vegetable Oil, for frying
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. (5 mL) fresh rosemary, picked off stem and chopped
- 1 tsp. (5 mL) sea salt

Directions:

Slice beets paper thin on a mandolin or meat slicer (approx 1/8 inch). Separate on a baking sheet lined with paper towel to remove any moisture. Preheat vegetable oil to 325F (160C). Mix garlic, rosemary and sea

salt in a bowl and set aside. Carefully cook about 1 cup of sliced beet at a time. Use a mesh sieve to move beets around in hot oil. Remove beets from oil and place on a paper towel-lined baking sheets and let oil drip off. Season cooked beets and serve.

Makes about 6 cups.



Wild Blueberry Bannock

Ingredients:

- 2 cups (500 mL) all purpose flour
- 2 tsp. (10 mL) sugar
- 1/2 tsp. (2 mL) salt
- 4 tsp. (20 mL) baking powder
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) wild blueberries
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) vegetable shortening (or butter)
- 1 egg beaten
- 2/3 cup (150 mL) 2% milk

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425F (220C). In a stainless steel bowl, sift flour, sugar, salt and baking powder together. In another bowl combine milk and eggs together, mix well, and set aside.

Cut shortening into flour using a pastry cutter or 2 knives to pea size nuggets. Add milk and eggs mixture and blend. Knead together for 3 – 5 minutes and flatten out slightly to 1-inch (2.5cm) thick. Cut into 2-inch (5cm) circles and place 1-inch (2.5cm) apart on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake in oven for 10 – 12

minutes or until golden brown.

Note: Use 1/4 dried berries or 1/2 cup fresh raspberries instead of wild blueberries. For plain scone omit berries.

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/07/14/celebrating-aboriginal-cuisine-with-recipes-from-chef-david-wolfman>

Folk rock meets the Far North in sounds of the Jerry Cans

by [Alexander Varty](#) on July 15th, 2015 at 1:26 PM



The Jerry Cans' music is a happy marriage of distinct musical cultures: folk-rock from below the Arctic Circle and traditional throat singing from above. So it's not entirely surprising that the Nunavut-based quintet is also the product of an intercultural marriage, in this case between songwriter and vocalist Andrew Morrison and throat singer and accordion player Nancy Mike.

He's of European descent, she's Inuit, and together they're making music that's a powerful, even joyous, riposte to media reports that life in the North is nothing but unmitigated despair.

"Succinctly, I would say that all of the songs are very much about life in Nunavut, whether they're happy songs or celebration songs or whether they're more tragic, sad songs," Morrison explains by phone, reached with Mike during an Ottawa tour stop. "We try to cover all the bases and complicate what people might think of the North—share some of the positive and a bit of the negative as well."

More than half of the songs on the band's second album, *Aakuluk*, are sung in Inuktitut and presented without translation. That won't keep those who don't speak the language from enjoying the Jerry Cans' energy—in that regard, they've been compared to the Pogues and the Clash—but Mike notes that some of the songs are humorous, while others carry a more serious message.

“One of them is talking about PETA, the organization, and how it doesn't understand the Inuit and seal hunting—how we use sealskin and how we eat seal and things like that,” she says. “That's one of the most powerful songs for me, as an Inuk—as someone who eats and uses seal. That's a big, big part of my family and our way of life.”

“Qanuinnigittuq”, on the other hand, is Morrison's self-deprecating tale of how he came to learn Inuktitut. “It didn't start off as some big political journey,” he explains. “It was just me trying to impress Nancy's in-laws.”

“When I met Andrew, he didn't speak Inuktitut very well,” Mike notes. “But he really wanted to speak with my grandfather and my dad because they only spoke Inuktitut. Music was his way of learning, but it's also our way, together, to preserve the language.”

Video of The Jerry Cans "Aakuluk" Northern release of new album!

Another of their goals, Morrison continues, is to preserve a worldview that is undeniably threatened by the new languages, bureaucracies, religions, and material goods that have entered the North during the past century. Maintaining the language, he says, is the key to Inuit survival.

“When we started to sing in Inuktitut, there was an overwhelming outpouring of support,” he says. “People were so happy to see young people wanting to do this and encouraging others, and now we're one piece in a stronger movement of lots of young people making this very, very concentrated effort to sing in Inuktitut. It's very cool to see the impact of a few little words on a page, or a few little songs here and there.

“We're very happy about the direction we've been going,” Morrison adds, “but there's always more work to be done!”

The Jerry Cans play the Vancouver Folk Music Festival's Stage 5 on Sunday (July 19).

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/music/490406/folk-rock-meets-far-north-sounds-jerry-cans>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Second-time success for First Nations retailer at new YVR outlet mall

‘Stop, drop and roll’ strategy helped Michelle Nahanee find triumph in defeat

By Jenny Lee, Vancouver Sun July 12, 2015

Never say die. Michelle Nahanee’s dream business, an indigenous-inspired tea shop, lasted all of two weeks before she closed its East Vancouver doors earlier this year.

Yesterday, the Squamish Nation retailer opened The Capilano Tea House and Botanical Soda Company for a second time — at the swanky new McArthur Glen Designer Outlet near Vancouver International Airport.

“It’s always hard to admit you’ve made a mistake,” said Nahanee, 46, a communications consultant and graphic artist who grew up on North Vancouver’s Squamish Nation reserve.

Nahanee and her cousin, both single mothers, had dreamed up the original tea house concept with their young adult daughters in mind.

“We just wanted them to have a chance to have more control over their lives, to work for themselves,” Nahanee said.

But the first cute and inexpensive location on Vancouver’s Powell Street turned out to mean minimal walk-by traffic. Nahanee’s plans to blend and package tea in-store fell through when she discovered the deteriorating heritage building posed major electrical, plumbing and permit challenges.

“I thought ‘this is a fringe business, so it’s OK to be in a little bohemian space in East Vancouver,’” Nahanee said.

But early clientele attracted by Nahanee’s publicity material were more mainstream than expected.

In its first two weeks, The Capilano’s aboriginal-inspired tea blends and sodas attracted \$500-a-day in sales to foodies, hipsters, and Vancouver’s large and growing health-conscious population, as well as queries from small retailers.

Nothing about that first boot-strapped operation — \$15,000 total capital investment — was ready for the flurry of business.

Nahanee's point-of-sale system didn't work with her payment processing system, and what's more, the crisis revealed the partners had incompatible ideas about how the business should develop.

Nahanee wanted to bring aboriginal botanicals and flavours to a broader market — “You could have this or you could have coffee, but you'll feel better with this,” — while her herbalist cousin was more focused on indigenous medicine.

That's when Nahanee pulled out the tough love that few entrepreneurs can muster.

“It just reached tipping point where my logic kicked in. It was March 30, first thing in the morning, and I just knew it couldn't continue the way it was going.”

So Nahanee pulled the plug. She shut her doors, parted with her cousin, and regrouped — this time with her daughter Paisley, 18, as a full partner of the tea house and sole proprietor of The Capilano Botanical Soda Company.

No stranger to hard work, Nahanee started out as a Great Canadian Casino “coffee girl.” The single mother built a home-based communications business to support her baby daughter, began her bachelor's degree in communication when Paisley turned 11, and on graduating last year, promptly started on her masters. Her thesis will be on aboriginal-specific communication.

Before opening again, both Nahanees took a “business planning for food processors” class with food consultant Andrea Gray-Grant, who was impressed at their clear-eyed self-assessment that production was a key weakness.

The Capilano's “biggest point of difference is that it's a First Nations brand,” Gray-Grant said. “That's why they are being so well received.”

Squamish Nation hereditary chief Janice George is helping mother and daughter with herbs and flavours.

“I drank stinging nettle tea as a kid,” said George who has both academic and cultural knowledge of herbs. “It tastes a little bit spinachy. We made the burdock root into tea. That doesn't smell very good though. You've got to mix it good with lots of mint.”

Mother and daughter now source botanicals from a wholesaler, and an established manufacturer gave them a break in blending, packaging and labelling their small-volume order.

Gray-Grant is advising the Nahanees on labelling, product formulation, and scaling, and helped them connect with other small food entrepreneurs. It's exhausting and “fatal” for newcomers to silo themselves, Gray-Grant said.

Today, The Capilano is one of 10 micro-businesses operating at McArthur Glen for a two-month run under the wing of Hawkers Market, a three-year-old Vancouver food incubator owned by chef/entrepreneur Chris Jerome.

“Michelle and Paisley had the basic business model, branding and product figured out. We’ve been working on putting them in front of people,” Jerome said.

At McArthur Glen, The Capilano has 1,200 square feet with “a nice bay window, a few tables” and “plumbing and electrical installed to code by McArthur Glen. So happy!” Nahanee said.

The duo pay Jerome for the space, marketing and some management.

“I haven’t really broken it down, but it’s more affordable than we could get alone, and we couldn’t access it alone anyway,” Nahanee said.

Later, they will participate in Jerome’s Hawkers Wharf project scheduled to open in North Vancouver next spring.

“There will be a shared kitchen. I don’t have to buy the \$25,000 kitchen to make my \$3 cup of tea.”

Nahanee’s investment has now risen to \$31,000.

“We’re self-funded from my graphic design business and personal credit. The Squamish Nation Small Business Department contributed \$500 towards an \$1,800 piece of equipment,” said Nahanee who wants to dispel the “dominant narrative” that all native businesses are government funded.

She did take a small loan from a friend to recover from \$4,000 lost through the first store.

Mother and daughter also hope to help redefine the popular concept of a First Nations business.

“Growing up, when you hear ‘First Nation business’, you think of the tourist shops in Gastown or a kitschy café,” said Paisley who designed The Capilano’s minimalist, modern interior with low-key aboriginal elements such as antlers and wall weavings.

A cup of tea sells for \$3; organic soda for \$4 and a 50-gram package of tea — with names like Senakw Village, Roots and Chai, Hiking the Canyon, Elderberry Green and Juniper Rooibos — run \$8.99 to \$10.99.

“I see this journey as about lessons learned and I’m proud of my own flexibility of being able to say ‘No, this is wrong. Let’s get more information and get this right,” Nahanee said.

“The stop, drop and roll saved my life and it was worth every penny to position The Capilano for strong growth with a solid foundation.”

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Second+time+success+First+Nations+retailer+outlet+mall/11202146/story.html>

Aboriginal Community Development

More Saskatchewan First Nations opening 'Rez Cross' evacuation centres

Ahtahkakoop, Muskeg Lake getting ready for evacuees

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 10, 2015 1:40 PM CT Last Updated: Jul 10, 2015 1:46 PM CT



The hockey arena, home to the Blackhawks, at the Beatty's & Okemasis First Nation has been turned into an impromptu shelter for wildfire evacuees in Saskatchewan. (Victoria Dinh/CBC)

An experiment that started at the Beatty's and Okemasis First Nation earlier this week is expanding.

The Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation has set up an evacuation centre in its school that will hold around 100 people.

While not officially sanctioned Red Cross evacuation centres, the ['Rez Cross' centres are maintained and operated](#) by First Nations and tribal councils.

"We know how it is to be far from home," coordinator Christina Little said. "And we knew that we have the capacity and the facilities to be able to house some of these evacuees. That's why we started to get together and coordinate what we could do on our end."

The First Nation is sending vans and buses to evacuation centres to pick people up today in Cold Lake and Prince Albert.

As of now, the First Nation is paying for the project with no help from anyone else. It is buying cots, bedding and food for people. The community said it's a good use of money.

"We have people here on our end that are taking in donations and our volunteers that are out here saying, 'What can what can we do to help?'" she said. "Our community has really come together."

The Muskeg Lake Cree Nation is also in the process of setting up its own evacuation centre. It's waiting for final approval from the Prince Albert Grand Council.

Muskeg Lake recently allowed a family who were staying at an evacuation centre to camp on its reserve.

"They have four kids," band councillor Barrett Greyeyes said. "That's a big family to be staying in dorms."

Greyeyes said it's important to extend hospitality to people who need it.

"We're all from the same community and background," he said. "One day it may be us. Let's hope it never happens, but if it did, I would hope that people do the same for my community."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/more-saskatchewan-first-nations-opening-rez-cross-evacuation-centres-1.3147117>

A round up of fires burning through western Canada – help on the way from all corners

July 9, 2015 by [Iman Kassam](#)



(Volunteers from Muskeg Lake Cree Nation fight a forest fire in northern Saskatchewan Photo: Muskeg Lake Cree Nation)

Iman Kassam

APTN National News

MUSKEG LAKE CREE NATION, SASK – The Muskeg Lake Cree Nation is getting ready to take in 100 evacuees fleeing fires in northern Saskatchewan.

“It’s right for First Nations to help First Nations,” said councillor Albert Dean Lafond.

According to Lafond, the idea came from a council meeting after some members heard of horror stories about Elders not receiving enough support at the Red Cross camps.

Lafond said evacuees will be put up in the old band office and will make up a special room for elders.

Northern parts of Saskatchewan have been ravaged with 601 fires so far this years, compared to 210 last year.

54 communities have been evacuated forcing 13,000 people from their homes.

Some have been sent to larger communities where they stay in gymnasiums and recreation centres.



Donations coming in for evacuees in Prince Albert. Photo: Muskeg Lake Cree Nation

“It will be quieter and away from crying children so they can watch TV” Lafond told APTN on where Elders will be housed.

The First Nation sent out hunters who came back with two elk that will be served to the Elders.

“People aren’t getting good food over there. They’re probably eating McDonalds, fast food in the bigger city. That’s not their traditional diet,” said Lafond.

According to the community, the Red Cross is expected to come by to inspect the facility, but Lafond said he’s not looking for their authorization.

“We don’t need their approval. We will help our First Nations brothers and sisters anyway.”

In a new Facebook group ‘Sask Evacuations – Helping one another’, people are offering up support, advice, laundry services, babysitting, food, transportation, hair cutting, and more.

Some community members have even gone hunting to bring tradition foods to the evacuation centres in Saskatchewan.

The provincial government posted on Facebook that 360 Canadian Forces personnel and 600 local firefighters are on the ground in the Weyakwin/Montreal Lake area and La Ronge area – two of the provinces most at-risk areas.

95 per cent of La Ronge, the largest community in northern Saskatchewan, has been evacuated.

The Canadian military has been called in to battle the fires. 500 troops have received the 12-hour crash course on fire suppression, and 900 more are on standby for training.



A convoy from the 3rd Canadian Division head north in Saskatchewan. Photo: Jaydon Flett/APTN

British Columbia

Smoke from the BC fires has spread across the three Prairie Provinces and into Ontario and Quebec.

There are nearly 200 active wildfires in British Columbia that have burned through 2,150 square kilometers of land. The province expects that with lightening strike, roughly 30 new fires will start each day.



NASA satellite photo shows smoke from fires burning in British Columbia

The province is also burning through its wildfire budget. They have already spent \$90-million on fire suppression efforts, going well over their \$60-million budget... and the spending isn't over.

The provinces forest ministry is bringing back to life the last remaining Martin Mars water bomber.

“Given the extraordinary fire situation this year, and recognizing that public safety is paramount, we need to look at every possible tool in our toolbox,” said Minister Steve Thomson in a release.



The Martin Mars is being brought out of retirement to help with fires in BC. Photo: avioners.net

The Martin Mars carries a hefty price tag of \$40,000 per day and \$10,000 per hour. But on the flip side, it can carry more than 27,000 litres of water. The air craft retired in 2013, but in its younger years it was used in the U.S. Navy and to fight forest fires in BC.

Alberta

Some help has arrived.

62 firefighters from Mexico have landed in Alberta where they'll help fight 95 wildfires, 30 of which are considered out of control.

The group from Jalisco, Mexico will join the 1,700 firefighters who have been dulling the blazes for several weeks.

The evacuation notice has lifted for the 200 people from North Tallcree First Nation who fled their homes after a blaze came within five kilometers of their community, but the wildfire hazard warnings remain extreme in northern Alberta.



Relief supplies pour into Cold Lake, Alta for Saskatchewan fire evacuees.

Wildfires are burning through Western Canada, and the country is running out of firefighters.

Fire crews from as far away as Australia have been called in to support the efforts in BC.

Firefighters from Quebec, Ontario, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and South Dakota have been helping out as well.

Currently the country is battling over 800 wild fires, 117 are considered out of control, and 31 are top priority.

For Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Alberta, this forest fire season is making history as they deal with the worst of the worst. All three provinces are sitting at an agency preparedness level of 5 (of 5), with the highest potential of exhausting fire resources nationally.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/07/09/a-round-up-of-fires-burning-through-western-canada-help-on-teh-way-from-all-corners/>

Saskatoon community garden grows thanks to aboriginal culture

Methods of Aboriginal culture will be used to plant the seeds and help the garden grow

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 10, 2015 4:08 PM CT Last Updated: Jul 10, 2015 5:42 PM CT



The Revitalizing Indigenous Agriculture Project uses methods of Aboriginal culture. (Victoria Dinh/CBC)

There is a new community garden at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, but this isn't your typical agricultural project.

Through the Revitalizing Indigenous Agriculture Project, methods of indigenous culture will be used to plant the seeds and help the garden grow.

"The project itself this year has focused primarily on the corn, the beans, and the squash," said project coordinator Glenda Abbott. "We've had nine sessions where we've had different knowledge keepers come out and facilitate a session to pass on knowledge."



Glenda Abbott is the project coordinator of the project. (Victoria Dinh/CBC)

Part of the garden is a replica of Buffalo Bird Woman's early 1900's garden. She was a traditional Mandan Hidatsa woman from the North Dakota Fort Berthold Reservation.

The second part is based on Mohawk traditions using the idea of growing for sustenance. Earlier this summer, the group hosted a Mohawk elder who taught them teach traditional seed songs.

"[We're] growing a lot of corn in rows with the squash in the center kind of vining out as kind of a sacred keeper of those rows," said Abbott. The group is also using fish heads as fertilizer under the corn mounds.

In the center of the garden, there is a pollinator section.

"[This is to] encourage the presence of our indigenous bees," said Abbott. "We have 350 species of bees here and we're hoping they come out and pollinate our garden."

Tobacco, peppers, peas, chili and strawberries surround the centre of the garden.

Adam Gaudry is one of the gardeners. He appreciates the mix of ceremonial and practical methods



Adam Gaudry is one of the volunteer gardeners. (Victoria Dinh/CBC)

"It's about building relationships with the plants as we plant them and understanding what they need and what they're giving us and trying to think of it as more of a reciprocal relationship," said Gaudry.

The group hopes that the garden will be able to supply the park's restaurant and also be used to develop a seed bank for Wanuskewin.

The last workshop of the season for the garden will take place in September.

"We'll have knowledge keepers come out and teach us about the tradition, and the ancestral passing of seed keeping," said Abbott. "A really important part of indigenous

agriculture is [to know] where our seeds come from and how we pass that knowledge from one generation to the next."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatoon-community-garden-grows-thanks-to-aboriginal-culture-1.3147407>

Yukon gov't, First Nations launch safety committee

Community safety committee will meet 3 times per year

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 10, 2015 4:49 PM CT Last Updated: Jul 10, 2015 5:42 PM CT



Women's Directorate minister Elaine Taylor, Council of Yukon First Nations justice manager Brenda Jackson, Kwanlin Dün First Nation Chief Doris Bill and Minister of Justice Brad Cathers announced the creation of a new community safety committee in Whitehorse today. (Government of Yukon)

The Yukon government is teaming up with First Nations, the RCMP and other organizations to create a new community safety committee.

The group's mandate is to expand relationships under the "Sharing Common Ground" initiative, which came from the 2010 review of the Yukon policing. The committee will work to find community-driven solutions to some of the issues identified by the review.

The committee will meet three times a year. The chairmanship of the committee will rotate every 18 months. The first meeting will be co-chaired by an official from the Department of Justice and the Council of Yukon First Nations' justice manager, Brenda Jackson.

The community safety committee also includes the Association of Yukon Communities and the Yukon Women's Coalition.

The government made the announcement this morning.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-gov-t-first-nations-launch-safety-committee-1.3147360>

Six Nations fire chief fears looming disaster



Six Nations Fire Department Fire Chief Matthew Miller poses in Ohsweken, Ont., on Saturday, July 11, 2015. Miller says First Nations fire services across the country are chronically underfunded. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Mark Spowart

Jul 12, 2015

TORONTO - A string of suspected arsons, inexperienced volunteer staff and a truck ladder that isn't high enough hasn't stopped the fire department at Canada's most populated First Nation from scraping by.

But as the Six Nations of the Grand River unit in southwestern Ontario grapples with relentless emergency calls, regular staff turnover and a constant struggle to make ends meet, its fire chief says he's bracing for an inevitable disaster.

Matthew Miller said his department has about twice the call volume and one third of the funding as similarly sized municipalities, even though federal government statistics show First Nations people on reserves are about 10 times more likely to die in fires.

"As it is right now, we're barely hanging on by a thread," Miller said of serving the on-reserve population of about 12,000.

"Essentially what's happening is everybody is getting exhausted and pushed to their limits physically and mentally."

The crew serving the First Nation consists of 21 part-time volunteers who have separate full-time jobs, and many haven't been properly trained.

Miller said he usually gets two or three emergency calls every day — or about 700 per year — but if that number gets any higher, the department won't be able to handle it.

"It's just a recipe for disaster, for something really bad to happen," he said.

So far this year, the community has dealt with 10 house fires, a large chemical fire at its recycling facility and nine suspected arsons currently under investigation.

Neighbouring departments are often called in to help with larger emergencies, something Miller called a "Band-Aid solution."

Yasir Naqvi, the province's minister of community safety and correctional services, toured Six Nations on June 6 to review its emergency services after receiving an invitation from Chief Ava Hill.

Naqvi said he will be asking his federal counterparts to address the community's fire safety concerns, and Miller wrote to federal Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau about the issue on Wednesday.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada said in a statement that it provides \$26 million annually for fire protection on the reserve.

"Our regional office is in regular contact with the Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation," it said.

"We also know that education and awareness play an integral role in fire safety and we will continue to work with First Nation communities and provide annual funding (to fire education organizations)."

Miller said First Nations across Canada are facing the same issues because there is no legislative framework to mandate fire prevention and protection like there is for most off-reserve communities.

"First Nations receive funding for fire protection only, not what every other fire service in the world does," he said.

"If you're in a car accident and you get trapped in your car, we could put the fire out, but we're not funded to get you out of your car."

Blaine Wiggins with the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada agreed, saying the reason why so many aboriginal people are dying in fires is simple, but answering why the system is failing them is not.

"Here we are trying to do what's normal in the fire service but we can't compete," he said.

"(First Nations) are just kind of left to develop and try to meet what the community can afford to meet, versus what is an established standard that all communities would have to meet."

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5729737-six-nations-fire-chief-fears-looming-disaster/>

Wildfire 'beast' turned Montreal Lake Cree Nation homes into twisted metal, ash

[National News](#) | July 12, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#) |

Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

MONTREAL LAKE CREE NATION, Sask.—Montreal Lake Cree Nation Chief Edward Henderson gazes across the obliterated remains of the building, once a four-plex, now nothing but ash, twisted tin and metal strewn in what was once the foundation which now resembles a crater.

The wildfire wiped out five other buildings, all homes, in the community in the same way.

The flames completely consumed the structure, leaving nothing but ashen dust and the warped and blackened shapes of stoves and washing machines.

While the losses weigh heavily on Henderson, he knows it could have been much worse. A shift in wind, a twist of fate, saved the community from being completely destroyed on July 3 when a "beast" of a wildfire roared through the reserve.

"It is hard to explain," said Henderson, as he toured the community Friday evening. "It could be because of the wind change that saved some of these houses."

Henderson said the four-plex was destroyed by an "acorn," a flaming missile launched by the approaching wildfire that can travel over two kilometres beyond the main wall of the flames.

"It's like throwing matches ahead of you, about a mile ahead of you," said Henderson.

The four-plex stood between two houses and the heat of the fire melted the siding on both like wax.



One of the homes in Montreal Lake destroyed by a wildfire. (APTN/Photo)

Just off another road in the community along a wooded stretch lies the ashen remains of another home. A wooden deck chair somehow survived and it is surrounded by trees that now resemble a forest of charred wooden matchsticks.

Throughout the community the tracks of the flames, some still smouldering, reveal how close it all came to complete devastation. Sometimes the fire swept to the threshold of a backdoor, or surrounded a lot, but never consumed the home.

In one instance, the wildfire burned the shed and car in the backyard of a home, but suddenly swept in another direction before touching the main structure. That home stood on a road lined with houses that was about to be consumed by a “wall of fire” that changed course with no explanation, said Henderson.

“I thought for sure we were going to lose this street in this subdivision,” he said.



Montreal Lake Chief Edward Henderson stands beside the charred remains of a car in the backyard of a Montreal Lake home. (APTN/Photo)

The wildfire hit with full force at about 6 p.m. that Friday, knocking out the power, said Henderson.

Barry Roberts, 21, did not leave with the evacuation triggered the week before and was in his brother’s house when he saw the flames across the street that day.

“We couldn’t grab nothing, we looked out the window and seen those flames and ran out of the house. We didn’t even have time to lock the door,” said Roberts, who was

evacuated to Prince Albert, Sask., which sits about 100 kilometres south of Montreal Lake.

His brother's house survived.

Leona Bird, 44, wasn't so lucky. After living in her mother's basement with her four children for seven months she finally moved into her new home five months ago. Now, it's destroyed. She found out flames consumed her home on Facebook after someone posted photos of the fire.

"I didn't believe it was burning," she said.

Bird said her biggest losses are her children's baby photographs and photographs of family members her mother gave her for safe keeping.

"Sometimes I get emotional thinking about it because you can't replace those things," said Bird, who was also evacuated to Prince Albert.

RCMP Sgt. Al Presler vividly remembers that Friday.

"We were surrounded by fire. There was fire from the south and then from the west. You look behind you and it's barreling over the road. You initially feel trapped," said Presler, who is the detachment commander for the area.

Presler managed to capture on his cell phone the desperate air war launched that day to save the community. In one video you can see two water bombers, the type that skid over lakes to pick up water, piercing the smoke and delivering their payload.

"This beast is coming through and you are running for your life... It's scary," said Presler. "It's something you can't even explain."

The battle for Montreal Lake continues.

A convoy of Canadian Forces personnel riding LAV's with gun muzzles covered arrive every day at 8 p.m. as part of Operation LENTUS to beat back the flames still threatening the community. There are about 150 military personnel in the Montreal Lake area currently engaged in the task, according to spokesperson Capt. Brian Kominar.



A Canadian Forces LAV rolls into Montreal Lake to continue battling flames. (APTN/Photo)



A helicopter with a water payload flies over Montreal Lake on the way to douse wildfire. (APTN/Photo)

Through the air, helicopters make regular runs to drop their water payloads just beyond the main community where the fire continues to flare.

Henderson said there are also about 150 firefighters and nine firetrucks in the area continuing to protect Montreal Lake from a repeat of July 3.

Most of the firetrucks were sent by First Nation communities in response to a call-out from Henderson. Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Fire Chief Jason Ledoux was one those who answered Henderson's call and he brought his community's firetruck and a crew of six to bolster the front lines.

"I really wanted to come and do this," said Ledoux, who is related to people in Montreal Lake and sings for music group, In Disguise, with a member of the community. "That is part of our heritage to help each other and make sure we are okay."

Ledoux said the battle against the wildfire is grueling as his crew often finds itself up to 1,000 yards deep into the forest with their hoses trailing back to the truck.

“We have been putting down hotspots. We have been knocking it literally out of the trees,” he said. “Yesterday we saved a house, there was quite a flare-up and if we didn’t knock it out of the trees it would have burnt the house down.”

Then, there’s the horseflies he calls “bulldogs” that constantly swarm his crew.

“There’s lots of bulldog action... they bite hard and they swarm the trucks and they are attracted to the heat and the water. They are all around you steady,” he said.

There’s also an ever present danger, not only from the fire, but from the trees weakened by the flames.

One of his crew members recently had a close call, he said.

“We had a tree come down,” said Ledoux. “He only had a few seconds to get out of the way and it ripped the hose out of his hands when it came down.”

Ledoux said Saskatchewan’s wildfire fighting regulations only let his crew battle flames between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Night firefighting is not allowed and that’s a mistake, he said.

“The last three hours of the day are more productive than the first eight hours,” he said. “The fire is laying back, it’s cooler, the bugs are down and there’s less heat.”



Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Fire Chief Jason Ledoux stands next to his firetruck in Montreal Lake.



Lionel Bird stands by his bulldozer he's been using to build firewalls. Bird says province making a mistake restricting night firefighting. (APTN/Photo)

Montreal Lake member Lionel Bird agrees. For the past 12 days Bird has been operating a bulldozer in the Montreal Lake area trying to build firewalls to surround the fire. Bird is a veteran of the forest fire wars and he remembers crews engaging the flames through shifts covering 24 hours.

"In the old days crews would go all night long. They were able to see hot spots and they were able to put them out when the wind is less and it's colder...the guys could go hard," said Bird. "During the day, with 25 to 30 degree temperatures with a lot of wind makes firefighting that much harder and that much more dangerous."

Bird said Saskatchewan's decision to forbid night firefighting was made by a bureaucracy with no idea about front line battles.

"I believe it was somebody behind a desk that decided this was the best approach. It's somebody that never walked a line, never fought a fire, but had all the training. That's how decisions are made," said Bird.

Henderson believes this type of bureaucratic thinking by Saskatchewan officials nearly cost his whole community after lightning struck sometime around June 25 triggering the fire that nearly wiped out Montreal Lake.

Henderson said community members wanted to attack the flames when the fire grew to about 10 hectares, but provincial officials refused to provide any help or allow volunteers to engage the flames without proper certification.

"Our people have been fighting fires for years without certification. They know the conditions. It would have been a totally different story if we were allowed to challenge that 10 hectare fire in our community," he said.

The fire has since grown to 4,000 hectares, said Henderson.

Saskatchewan officials only swung into action when Montreal Lake was in dire threat, said Henderson. Provincial officials gave the community only 2 hours to evacuate about 900 people, he said.

“That is the frustrating part over the last couple of weeks. We were being told over and over again there is no threat to your community,” he said. “We are watching people standing by wanting to fight the fire, but told ‘you have to be certified.’”

While the Canadian Forces are focusing their Saskatchewan efforts in the Montreal Lake area and farther north in La Ronge, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall has all but ignored the plight of the Cree nation, said Henderson.

Henderson said he has never received a call from the premier who has passed through the area on the way to La Ronge, which has a population of 2,700 and sits about 380 kilometres northeast of Saskatoon. La Ronge sits next to the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, which has a population of about 10,000 people. Both communities have been evacuated and face serious threat from a massive wildfire on its borders.

The area’s local Conservative MP Rob Clarke has also failed to contact Henderson to find out how the community is doing.

“Not even a courtesy call,” said Henderson.

Henderson did receive a call from the provincial environment minister Friday.

Back in Prince Albert where many Montreal Lake residents are staying, there was talk that they could return home as early as Tuesday.

Henderson said that appears unlikely now and it could be at least a week before people can come home.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/07/12/wildfire-beast-turned-montreal-lake-cree-nation-homes-twisted-metal-ash/>

Inuit youth conquer and brighten an urban wall

“I feel so excited about it”

SARAH ROGERS, July 14, 2015 - 8:30 am



From left, Cie Taqiasaq, Parr Etidloie, Audi Qinnuayuaq and Latch Akesuk, stand in front of the completed mural they designed and painted onto the side of a building in downtown Toronto. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)



The 60-foot high mural covers the side of a youth hostel at the intersection of Church and Adelaide Streets in Toronto. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)

TORONTO — If you couldn't hear them chatting in Inuktitut, these four Nunavummiut teens might look like your average Torontonians, sitting on curbs and skateboards along a busy downtown street, smoking and eating a box of Tim Hortons donuts in the sweltering summer heat.

But in the short time these teens have been here, they've made a huge impression on the neighbourhood.

A passerby dismounts from her bicycle, takes a long look at the wall behind the teens, and wishes them congratulations.

"It looks amazing," she said.

Cape Dorset artists Audi Qinnuayuaq, Latch Akesuk, Cie Taqiasaq and Parr Etidloie just completed one of the biggest projects of their lives: a giant, colourful mural on the side of a youth hostel in downtown Toronto.

The image, which easily grabs the attention of hostel guests, pedestrians and drivers stopped at red rights, portrays a Cape Dorset elder — Parr Etidloie's grandfather, Etulu — carrying a broken-down snowmobile on his back.

It's a story Etidloie heard often growing up; one he thought made the stuff of legends, and apparently, urban street art.

What would his grandfather think of being painted onto a wall in a big southern city? Etidloie, 16, laughs. "I'd like to see his face, when he finally sees it."

Atop the snowmobile, a giant walrus spans the wall, its body a puzzle of interconnected faces of seals, polar bears, wolves, fish and even humans.

Other wildlife stand on the back of the walrus, backed by a giant orange sun.

"We sketched it all on paper first, and then projected it onto the wall," explains 17-year-old Cie Taqiasaq, "and then we just started painting."

The 60-foot-high mural took about a week to complete.

"I feel so excited about it," Taqiasaq said. "It feels good to be finished."

This is actually the second major mural the group has worked on, led by Toronto-based artists Alexa Hatanaka and Patrick Thompson and their [Embassy of Imagination initiative](#).

The first was a mural the group painted on one of the walls of Cape Dorset's Sam Pudlat elementary school, depicting a hand holding a tool, painted within the face of a bird.

But this Toronto mural is the group's first southern project, and likely to draw its largest audience yet.

All the artists agree: the mural is a great way to promote Inuit art and culture, not only to Torontonians, but to the many visitors staying at the hostel.

"This is our first project out of the North, so it's significant to do something so massive," Hatanaka said.

"And a lot of the time, art produced in Cape Dorset leaves the community, and they don't get to see it again," she added.

"So this is a change for them to see their legacy, and to see the high regard Cape Dorset art is held in."

To help audiences trace the work's origins, the group will put up a plaque on the mural to explain the image and its background.

And a blank wall just to the left of the mural may offer up a canvas for a future "add-on" to the mural in 2016, the group said.

This year's project was done with the support of two other organizations: Mural Routes and Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_youth_conquer_and_brighten_urban_wall/

First Nations group breaks ground on rental building in Langford

[Amy Smart](#) / Times Colonist
July 16, 2015 06:00 AM



When completed, the project on Goldstream Avenue will provide 30 two-bedroom and six three-bedroom units. Photograph By M'AKOLA HOUSING SOCIETY

A new affordable housing complex is rising in Langford, adding options for First Nations families and others in need.

Construction is underway at 550 Goldstream Ave., across from the Royal Colwood Golf Club, and is expected to be completed by February 2016.

The property, owned jointly by M'akola Housing Society and M'akola Development Services, will provide 36 rental units at affordable rates.

But there are more than 1,000 families in Greater Victoria on M'akola's wait-list for housing, CEO Kevin Albers said.

"It's critical to be able to house working families," Albers said. "This is an area of the capital region where people choose to live, so we really need to provide some in-housing options and that includes some in the range of affordability."

The project will provide 30 two-bedroom and six three-bedroom units.

The monthly rent will range from the provincially determined family shelter rate, which Albers said is \$540 for a two-bedroom, up to between 10 and 15 per cent below market value after the project is completed in 2016. Five units will also be “rent-gearred-to-income,” which means families will be charged 30 per cent of their household income.

The project will be a mixed-use building, with commercial space on the ground floor.

“That actually helps cross-subsidize the units above, because there’s no ongoing government support,” Albers said.

Once the development is complete, both M’akola Development Services and M’akola Housing Society will move their provincial headquarters into the commercial component.

There are four other M’akola housing projects in Langford, bringing the total number of its rental units up to 148 in the city.

“We’re not the only affordable housing provider in the City of Langford. There’s a lot of market housing being built as well, which is absolutely needed,” Albers said.

Langford Mayor Stew Young said the development helps fill a need for more affordable housing in the city.

The City of Langford is providing \$263,600 in municipal grants and tax breaks.

“We want young families and a diverse community and we want to include everybody,” he said.

The federal and provincial governments have committed a combined \$4.9 million through the Affordable Rental Housing initiative for the project.

“Our government is committed to supporting Canadian families in communities, but it takes the efforts of many and partnerships at all levels to create real results,” said John Duncan, minister of state and MP for Vancouver Island North.

The B.C. government will provide an additional \$6.3 million in construction finances.

Minister Responsible for Housing Rich Coleman said the development is relatively rare for its size, but was possible through strong partnerships.

“It’s somewhat unique in our marketplace today, we don’t do a lot of these,” Coleman said.

The Aboriginal Housing Management Association will provide an annual operating subsidy of \$43,868.

M’akola Development Services will provide about \$1.9 million in equity.

The development sits on the traditional territory of seven Coast Salish nations. Representatives from six of the seven were present at an event Tuesday announcing the project.

Songhees elder Elmer George, Esquimalt elder Maryanne Thomas and Tsartlip elder Alec Sam gave a blessing.

Sam said there are no M'akola projects in his community, but the Tsartlip are trying to apply for funding for affordable housing projects through banks.

Tsartlip Coun. Simon Smith said three- to four-bedroom suites would be more appropriate for those families that do need housing.

M'akola Group of Societies is the largest aboriginal housing provider in B.C. It hosts nearly 5,000 family members in more than 1,500 homes across the province.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/business/first-nations-group-breaks-ground-on-rental-building-in-langford-1.2002426#sthash.LB1LAHU9.dpuf>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

"We're just people helping people"

[Myles Fish](#)

Published on July 11, 2015

Following Beardy's lead, Muskeg Lake and Ahtahkakoop open their doors to northerners

Ninety-six kilometres southwest of Prince Albert, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation is home to around 450 residents.

It is getting ready to grow.



A view inside one of the rooms at the evacuation centre set up on the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation.

After spending the past few days putting mattresses in its old band administration offices and organizing everything northern residents evacuated from their homes will need, the First Nation started bringing evacuees to town on Friday afternoon.

“We’re not doing this to go on a map or anything, we’re just doing it because it’s the normal thing to do when it hits so close to home,” said councilor Albert Dean Lafond on Friday night.

“We’re people helping people and that’s all we want to be.”

The makeshift shelter has been set up to accommodate 100 people comfortably, but will house more if needed. After a request last weekend from Prince Albert Grand Council leadership to aid evacuees, councillor Barrett Greyeyes was hesitant about setting up a centre, as the band is small and budgets are tight.

He polled community members and they quickly took up the cause. Support rolled in from area towns as well, and in less than 24 hours the shelter had been cobbled together at no cost to the band.

It boasts individual rooms, there is a teepee set up outside and wild game has been harvested for meals. There are elders present to speak Cree to the tired evacuees and traditional practices can be readily organized.

“It’s a traditional way of life that they’re not getting in some places,” said Lafond. “We know what First Nations people are all about as we are First Nations. We just want to make them feel at home as they’re going through the mental mess in their head of what’s happening in their home territory.”

All around the Prince Albert area, alternatives to the Red Cross shelters are popping up.

Ahtahkakoop opened up its school for 100 evacuees on Friday, with transports arranged from P.A. and Cold Lake. Big River First Nation opened the doors to its band hall earlier this week and the YWCA in Prince Albert has offered its space as well.

James Smith Cree Nation also would like to set up a centre of its own at its school, but is still waiting for the location to be certified.

At the hockey rink on the Beardsley's & Okemasis First Nation, approximately 140 "visitors" are now being housed. Since the shelter was set up last Sunday, people who had been staying at city shelters have decamped to the reserve near Duck Lake.

"Families have been reunited in our centre. It feels really good to see them when they finally get all together," said Gerri Sutherland, one of six coordinators at what has been affectionately labelled 'Rez Cross.'

"Somebody jokingly called us the 'Rez Cross' and I think just from there the name stuck," she said. "It's kind of humorous; I guess you need to find some humour in this whole situation. You've got to lighten the mood."

At the centre, guests have been fed donated game and fish. A couple of the young males staying there indicated an interest in going hunting or fishing, with volunteers offering to take them along when they go.

Sutherland said the centre likely has a capacity of 250 people. The coordinators have been telling those who inquire that if they can get to Beardsley's, they can have a spot in the arena.

They aren't able to spare their vehicles though, needing them for activities and operations.

"It's overwhelming with the amount of calls from people that want to be picked up from the various centres," said Sutherland. "If they can get here then they're welcome here and we'll take care of them until the evacuation is lifted."

Amidst all the work coordinating the shelter, Sutherland found time to write an exam on Friday for the Indian Teacher Education Program she is enrolled in.

Donation needs

The 'Rez Cross' at Beardsley's has stopped accepting general donations, needing now to sort through what has already been received.

However, it still would like plastic utensils, Styrofoam plates, bowls and cups, as it is going through a lot of those. On Thursday, Sutherland said, kids heading into Rosthern to use the pool needed swim suits.

"It's unreal how fast things are provided for us when the need is there," she said.

At Muskeg Lake, organizers could use pillows, mattresses, hygiene items, baby necessities, kids clothing, towels and food. They also will need disposable kitchen items.

People are asked to contact Barrett Greyeyes (306-880-4324) or Albert Dean Lafond (306-466-6526) regarding donations and other volunteer offers for Muskeg Lake.

Direct Link: <http://www.paherald.sk.ca/News/Local/2015-07-11/article-4210843/Were-just-people-helping-people/1>

Aboriginal Peoples Court 'long overdue' in Thunder Bay

Proposed court would incorporate Aboriginal traditions, cultures and medicines

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 13, 2015 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 13, 2015 11:03 AM ET



Frances Wesley, (left) is coordinating workshops to help lay the ground work for an Aboriginal Peoples Court in Thunder Bay. Friendship Centre executive director Charlene Baglien, (right) says bringing the initiative to reality would be a dream come true. (Jody Porter/CBC)

The Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre is laying the groundwork for an Aboriginal Peoples Court in the northwestern Ontario city.

Brantford, Ont. is home to the province's first Aboriginal Peoples Court, opened in 2014. Advocates in Thunder Bay say they want to create their own version that would incorporate aboriginal traditions and cultures.

The initiative is in line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendation to eliminate the overrepresentation of aboriginal people in custody, said Friendship Centre executive director Charlene Baglien.

"There's lots of aboriginal people coming through the courts and with the recent Truth and Reconciliation report, they make it very clear that there is a need for other alternative justice mechanisms, Baglien said.

It makes sense to explore those alternatives in Thunder Bay, a focal point for First Nations people from remote communities and courts, she said.

"We could sit in a circle and talk with each other and we wouldn't have to race with time." - Frances Wesley

A meeting will be held this summer to gather the wisdom of aboriginal elders when it comes to justice. Other workshops will focus on educating legal professionals about the troubled relationship between aboriginal people and the law.

It's Frances Wesley's job to organize those workshops. She's the new the urban judicial partnership coordinator.

Regular courts race through the docket and don't have time to consider the life experiences of someone who has been charged, or to contemplate healing, Wesley said.

"In the courtroom that we're envisioning we could sit in a circle and talk with each other and we wouldn't have to race with time," she said. "When you talk about the things that have impacted us, you can't just say it in a few seconds and walk out of the courtroom. It's a long healing process."

A healthier community for everyone is the ultimate goal of an Aboriginal Peoples Court, Wesley said.

When her contract ends in March 2016, Wesley hopes the city is ready to embrace the concept.

"It's long overdue," Baglien said. "To see this a reality would be a dream of mine."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/aboriginal-peoples-court-long-overdue-in-thunder-bay-1.3146793>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Paul Martin urges 'united voice' on aboriginal education

GLORIA GALLOWAY

MONTREAL — The Globe and Mail - includes correction

Published Thursday, Jul. 09, 2015 9:24PM EDT

Last updated Friday, Jul. 10, 2015 7:23AM EDT

As the Conservative government's attempt to reform on-reserve education waits to die on the order paper, First Nations leaders are being urged to persuade Canadians they need more control over their schools than the proposed law allowed – and much more money to go along with it.

The First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act, which was put on ice after most chiefs said it would give too much control to the Aboriginal Affairs Minister, will be gone when the election is called later this summer. Its demise will leave unspent most of the \$1.9-billion the government offered for First Nations education on the condition that the legislation be endorsed and passed into law.

With the country preparing to go to the polls, former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin says it is time for the First Nations to make a public case for more education funding.

“Set out your own plan for successful education in a strong and united voice: a plan that explains why the First Nations must control their children's education, a plan that will show Canadians how you will run the system, a plan that stresses the importance of languages and culture and a plan that is at the top end of maths, sciences, geography, history and literature,” Mr. Martin told chiefs on Thursday, the final day of the three-day annual general meeting of the Assembly of First Nations.

The dropout rate on reserves is nearly 60 per cent, and after two decades of a 2-per-cent cap on spending increases, the base per-student funding has fallen well behind the rest of Canada.

When Canadians hear that 40 per cent less education funding is dedicated to six-year-olds living on reserve than six-year-olds who attend a non-reserve school 10 kilometres away, they are morally outraged, Mr. Martin said.

Ghislain Picard, the AFN's regional chief for Quebec and Labrador, who was one of the first to reject the legislation proposed by the government, offered a similar message to that of Mr. Martin at a special session on education on Thursday morning.

With an election coming in October, it is time to lobby the general public, Mr. Picard said. “Because of misconceptions, because of the lack of good will, we will need to once again make a case for education.”

The First Nations, he said, are open to reform, “but one has to understand that it shouldn't be one-sided, as we have seen in the last year, with the government saying that this is the way to go and you either follow or you don't, and if you don't, there are consequences.”

The First Nations say their students succeed when schools are controlled by their communities and they are taught in their own language and enveloped by their culture.

Bart Jack, a member of the First Nations board of education in Sheshatshiu in Labrador, told the AFN meeting that, between the 1960s and 2009, when non-aboriginal boards ran the education system, no more than 10 children from his community and neighbouring Natuashish completed high school. But since 2009, when the First Nations took control of education in those communities, 39 students have graduated from high school and a number have gone on to postsecondary education.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt insists the legislation he tabled last year would have ensured quality education on reserves along with a guaranteed funding escalator. And, he said in an e-mail, the government has made major investments in reserve school infrastructure and reforms that go well beyond the funding cap.

Complaints about the shortage of money for First Nations schools are “pretty rich coming from Paul Martin, as he is the one who placed [the] cap on all funding transfers to First Nations – including for education, as Liberal finance minister” in 1996, Mr. Valcourt wrote.

But Mr. Martin said the Kelowna Accord, which he negotiated with the First Nations when he was prime minister in 2005, would have lifted the cap. The Conservative government abandoned the accord.

“Will the funding that’s required to bring First Nations education to its proper level be costly?” he asked. “Of course it will in the short term. But it will be a heck of a lot less costly than what we see today when young lives are wasted. The question to ask is: What’s the cost of not doing it? What’s the cost of denying a young person a decent shot at life?”

Editor's Note: A story about former Prime Minister Paul Martin in Friday's paper said the Kelowna Accord was signed in 1995. It was signed in 2005.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/paul-martin-urges-united-voice-on-aboriginal-education/article25408791/>

Aboriginal education funding gap 'morally wrong and disgraceful,' Paul Martin says

Ex-PM says Harper government's approach too paternalistic, offers less funding than Kelowna Accord

The Canadian Press Posted: Jul 10, 2015 9:09 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 10, 2015 9:09 AM ET



Former prime minister Paul Martin addressed the Assembly of First Nations congress in Montreal Thursday, contrasting what his government tried to do in aboriginal education under the Kelowna Accord with the policy of Stephen Harper's Conservatives in the years since. (Ryan Remiorz/Canadian Press)

The Harper government is underfunding aboriginal schools and depriving First Nations children of any real chance of success, former prime minister Paul Martin said Thursday.

The Conservative government's native education policy is immoral, Martin said in a speech during the Assembly of First Nations' annual meeting.

"How can the government of Canada deprive a group of six-year-olds the same opportunity to learn to read and write as other six-year-olds have?" Martin said.

"It makes no sense ... it's morally wrong and it's disgraceful."

The ex-Liberal PM maintains the money needed to fund aboriginal schools at the same level as those in the rest of the country would be less than the cost of the lives of young aboriginals that are ruined by unemployment, suicide and school dropout.

He also says he's convinced that Canadians would support the country's First Nations in any educational initiatives and urged communities not to wait on Ottawa to make the first move.

"It's because of the kind of people across this country who want you to succeed, people who already support you and to whom Canadians will listen," Martin said.

'Massive gap' remains

Martin negotiated what became known as the Kelowna Accord, which included measures to reduce inequalities between natives and non-natives — notably in the field of education.

But the \$5-billion agreement was never put in place by the Conservative government, which took power in 2006.

"And years later, there is still a massive gap in education," Martin said.

The Conservatives introduced a \$1.9-billion education plan for First Nations, one that divided the community because some considered that the federal government was keeping too much control.

Following his speech, Martin criticized the plan as too paternalistic.

He said it provided less money than what was called for in the Kelowna Accord a decade ago.

Mobilizing aboriginal vote

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde gave the closing speech to the assembly on Thursday and reiterated that the goal of the meeting was to find ways to better the lives of aboriginals across the country.

He also called on native people to vote in the upcoming federal elections in the fall.

Bellegarde said the aboriginal vote could make a difference in 51 federal ridings.

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair and Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau also attended the assembly this week and both promised to address First Nations concerns differently than the governing Conservatives.

Mulcair offered a "new era" of nation-to-nation relations with indigenous communities while Trudeau said he will reset the relationship between natives and the federal government.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/aboriginal-education-funding-gap-morally-wrong-and-disgraceful-paul-martin-says-1.3146228>

Aboriginal Health

Cat Lake First Nation walkers protest lack of cancer care

People in isolated communities wait too long for a diagnosis, and access to care, Cat Lake resident says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 13, 2015 9:20 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 13, 2015 11:02 AM ET



Wilfred Wesley Jr., 17, Seth Peters, 15, Chief Russell Wesley, Joyce Wesley-Peters, and Christopher Oshag, 18, at the launch of their 3,000 km walk to raise awareness about the lack of health services in remote northern Ontario First Nations. (Cat Lake First Nation)

Four members of Cat Lake First Nation are walking from Thunder Bay to Vancouver, to raise awareness of cancer care needs in the far north.

Joyce Wesley-Peters is making the journey along with her two teenage sons and nephew. She told CBC News she's seen too many family members suffer because of the lack of cancer care services at home.



Joyce Wesley-Peters is one of four members of Cat Lake First Nation who are walking from Thunder Bay to Vancouver to raise awareness of cancer care needs in the far north. (Joyce Wesley-Peters)

"People should have that second chance in life," she said.

"We know the health care is there, but it's just not provided as much for First Nations people."

People in isolated communities currently have to wait too long for a diagnosis, and to access care in Thunder Bay or Winnipeg, Wesley-Peters said. She added things would be better if there was a cancer care clinic at the Sioux Lookout hospital, which could serve the far north.

"My uncle, when he went to the health care clinic he kept going there for three months, and by the time they [transported] him to Winnipeg his tumour was the size of a baseball."

Nine days later, the cancer proved fatal to her uncle. Wesley-Peters said she thinks it should have been caught sooner, and would have been, if there were cancer care services closer to home.

A hub for cancer care?

Cat Lake Chief Russell Wesley, who was at Friday's launch to support the walkers, said the isolation of remote communities creates geographic and financial barriers to accessing cancer care.

To serve more remote areas he said he'd like to see more cancer care centres in smaller cities.

"I don't think we have enough cancer services. The nearest one is in Thunder Bay," he said.

"We need to maybe place a better emphasis on providing cluster cancer care services. In our case, the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win hospital would be an ideal place, because it's a cluster centre."

Wesley would also like to see Sioux Lookout become a hub for cancer care, and he'd like more research to be done to better understand why cancer rates are so high in the north.

The walking group's journey is more than 3,000 kilometres, and they expect it to take upwards of three months to complete.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/cat-lake-first-nation-walkers-protest-lack-of-cancer-care-1.3149151>

Health care often a struggle for Alberta's aboriginal people, says analyst

Aboriginal health policy analyst says he has heard 'horror stories' like quadriplegic abuse case before

By Marion Warnica, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 10, 2015 6:00 AM MT Last Updated: Jul 10, 2015 9:55 AM MT



Gerald Francis has launched a multi-million dollar lawsuit against several doctors, hospitals, the health minister and Alberta Health Services. (CBC)

While Alberta health-care advocates decry the abuse case of a Cree quadriplegic man, they admit stories like his are all too common.

CBC was the first to report on the case of Gerald Francis, who was hospitalized just over two years ago after falling down the stairs.

He required emergency surgery for deep, badly-infected pressure wounds that a provincial government investigation found were directly related to abuse at the Wetaskiwin hospital.

Francis has now launched a multi-million dollar lawsuit against several doctors, hospitals, Health Minister Sarah Hoffman and Alberta Health Services. He claims abuse and systemic discrimination.

One example of discrimination alleged in the lawsuit is a failure to properly deal with a language barrier. Both Francis and his primary caregiver — his common-law partner Florence Youngchief — speak Cree as a first language.

Alberta Health Services does have aboriginal liaison workers and programming, but Francis claims he was never referred to those programs. The lawsuit says not having an interpreter available affected how much Francis and his partner understood about the seriousness of his condition and their decisions about treatment.

'Holes in the system'

"There are a lot of holes in the system for First Nations," said Kris Janvier, a health policy analyst for the Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta.

He described the complexities of approaching provincial health care from an aboriginal perspective as "very challenging," and he named current funding models as an example.

In Alberta, First Nations are not eligible to apply for many provincial grants that cover uninsured expenses such as wheelchairs. Instead, they must go through a federal fund called the Non-Insured Health Benefits program.

A family will often apply and be turned down the first time, Janvier explained. Sometimes, it takes two or three attempts over many years to secure funding.

"A lot of people give up before they get there," he said.

Alberta Health Services and the provincial Ministry of Health say they cannot comment on the case due to privacy and legal concerns, although they do plan to file a statement of defence.

Francis requires two wheelchairs. Twenty-seven months after his accident, he still hasn't got one.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/health-care-often-a-struggle-for-alberta-s-aboriginal-people-says-analyst-1.3145999>

Aboriginal History

First Nations groups mark 25 years since Oka Crisis



Morgan Lowrie, The Canadian Press
Published Saturday, July 11, 2015 7:15AM EDT
Last Updated Saturday, July 11, 2015 6:21PM EDT

OKA, Que. -- Twenty-five years after the beginning of the violent 78-day standoff between Quebec Mohawks and Canadian soldiers, the community of Kanesatake has not forgotten the Oka crisis or the reasons behind it.

Dozens of residents and other community members marched on Saturday along a tree lined dirt road, a path the Mohawks barricaded in 1990 to protest the proposed expansion of a golf course on what Mohawk leaders said was their land.

It was one of numerous events held to commemorate the anniversary of a crisis that began on July 11, 1990 when a shootout between Mohawks and provincial police resulted in the death of Cpl. Marcel Lemay in the town of Oka, about 45 minutes north-west of Montreal. The source of the bullet has never been discovered.



Mohawks from Kanesatake, Que., march to mark the 25th anniversary of the Oka Crisis, in Oka, Que., on Saturday, July 11, 2015. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Ryan Remiorz)



AFN Regional Chief Ghislain Picard, left, chats with Francine Lemay, right, sister of Marc Lemay who was killed in the raid that sparked the Oka crisis twenty-five years ago, after ceremonies marking the 25th anniversary of the Oka crisis Saturday, July 11, 2015 in Kanesatake, Que. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Ryan Remiorz)



Mohawks from Kanesatake, Que., march to mark the 25th anniversary of the Oka Crisis, in Oka, Que., on July 11, 2015. (Ryan Remiorz / THE CANADIAN PRESS)



A Mohawk native winds up to punch a soldier during a fight that took place on the Kahnawake reserve on Montreal's south shore, Tuesday, Sept.18, 1990. (Tom Hanson / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Saturday's march wound its way along the side of the golf course, past stop signs that Mohawk marchers said were the site of army roadblocks, where roughly 800 Canadian forces were called in after Lemay's shooting to encircle the community with barbed wire.

The crisis ended after 78 days of negotiations after both sides struck a deal: the barricades made of dirt and mangled police vehicles were to come down in return for the cancellation of the golf course expansion.

John Cree, one of the Mohawks leading the march, reminded the assembled people that the disputed territory remains unceded. He said much of the surrounding land, which the Mohawks claim, is under threat of development.

"That's why we're marching today," he said. "Not to show off but to say 'Hey, you owe us.' This is our land. We don't have to claim it. You don't have to claim something that's yours."

Many of the other speakers focused on conciliation and healing.

Francine Lemay, the sister of the slain police officer, said the crisis led her to eventually discovering the history of the Mohawks and the injustices they have suffered.

Since 2004 when she first visited the community and read -- and eventually translated into French -- a book on Mohawk history, she has dedicated her time to bridging cultural divides.

She has given herself the mandate of "peacemaker" in order to help build bridges between communities. She says she has seen an increased desire among Canadians to learn more about First Nations.

"People ask, explore, search, regret, act but much still needs to be done concerning recognition and reparation of wrongs," she said at Saturday's event.

The ceremony at Oka included both First Nations leaders and members of both municipal and provincial governments, including Aboriginal Affairs minister Geoff Kelley.

Kanesahtake Grand Chief Serge Simon shook hands with Oka mayor Pascal Quevillon. The two have agreed to jointly fight any development in the disputed land, known to the Mohawks as "the pines."

Quevillon said the gesture was just "officializing" a reconciliation that has been going on between the town of Oka and its Mohawk neighbors for years.

"It's been going well for several years now," he said. "We share commerces, and the two communities work together daily. I can't speak for all the citizens of the two communities, and some might still have bad feelings, but in general reconciliation has been done for several years."

Simon said the anniversary brought back many strong emotions and "things I haven't thought about in 25 years," including the persecution of Mohawk activists by provincial police.

"I still have a lot of anger, yes, and there's still some hatred there, but I'm trying to put it down, because I don't want it any more. I don't want to carry it any more."

The day's events also included a feast, lacrosse game and other festivities.

The event continues Sunday, when the focus shifts on honouring the community's residential school survivors.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/first-nations-groups-mark-25-years-since-oka-crisis-1.2464631>

What have we learned after the Oka crisis?

By Marian Scott, The Gazette July 11, 2015



A Mohawk warrior, with a high-powered rifle, takes cover during the 1990 Oka crisis.

Twenty-five years later, what changes did the Oka crisis bring about for aboriginal people in Canada? What lessons have been learned? Three commentators weigh in.

"In governmental terms, we've made almost no progress at all."

Stephen Lewis, Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations and UN envoy for HIV/AIDS:

I think if we had taken Oka seriously, if we had understood the insanity of a golf course versus the rights of aboriginal peoples, if we'd understood back then that we were trampling on the rights of First Nations, we wouldn't have had such a long and tumultuous time (that continues) until today. And we still haven't learned the lessons.

Not only has the federal government showed continuing contempt for aboriginal rights, but along comes an exemplary report (by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on residential schools, issued June 2), with a large number of thoughtful and important recommendations, and the prime minister makes it clear that he really doesn't care what the findings disgorge.

While we have come a long way in the sense that the aboriginal movement

is now strong and vocal and principled and focused, and we've come a long way in the sense that we're getting court judgments in favour of the rights to ownership

of land and the rights to be consulted before the lands submit to pipelines or to devastation of one kind or another, although we're beginning as a country to recognize there has to be a new contract with First Nations, the fact of the matter is that in governmental terms, we've made almost no progress at all.

This government couldn't care less. The discrimination in terms of the per capita payment for education, the contempt for (northern Ontario First Nation community) Attawapiskat and the Idle No More movement, the complete and total indifference,

the rhetorical flim-flam with which they surround themselves, is revolting.

"I'm not interested in making white folks feel guilty about the past."

Ronald Wright, author of *Stolen Continents: The "New World" Through Indian Eyes Since 1492* (1992, Viking): Lewis Ronald It was a turning point in the sense that since Oka, we have seen much more vocal, more effective political representation coming from First Nations throughout this country.

I'm not interested in making white folks feel guilty about the past. I am a white folk myself. It's what we do with this past. And the first duty we have is to understand what really happened, and to make amends however we can, and do it in full consultation and with the full consent of aboriginal people.

It's about ending a brutal colonial legacy in this country. The brutality and the hypocrisy of that colonial legacy was brought into focus by Oka.

It has led to an increased militancy and an increased determination among native people to make their case.

The Idle No More movement would be another example of that.

It's quite clear that this government has no interest in trying to make amends or redress the balance or reach some fair middle ground with indigenous people. Indeed, their actions point to exactly the opposite, that they see indigenous people as something

that might get in the way of making Canada an energy superpower with the export of dirty oil.

"The gap that needs to be closed" Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations: Oka resulted in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It was a five-year, \$60-million report. But how many of those RCAP recommendations have been implemented?

Twenty-five years later, if we would have acted and implemented those recommendations, I think the whole relationship with Canada and the gap that exists between the quality of life (between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples) would be closed.

If we really want to bring about reconciliation and a better Canada, we've got to start focusing on closing the socioeconomic gap that exists between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples in this country.

The United Nations Human Development Index has rated Canada sixth in terms of quality of life, but when you apply those same indexes to indigenous peoples, we're 63rd. That's the gap that needs to be closed, because that represents poverty. That represents overcrowded housing. That represents inequality of funding for education. That represents the mental health issues and the youth suicides. That represents the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, the violence in our community.

And I say that that's not good for our people and it's not good for this country. If we close that gap, that's not only good for our people that's good for Canada.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/What+have+learned+after+crisis/11206832/story.html>

Remembering the Oka Crisis 25 years later

[Kalina Laframboise, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: July 12, 2015 | Last Updated: July 12, 2015 6:54 PM EDT



Kanesatake Mohawks march through the Pines to mark the 25th anniversary of the Oka Crisis in Kanesatake, north of Montreal, on Saturday, July 11, 2015. Allen McNinnis / Montreal Gazette

The lingering anger was almost tangible during the symbolic march through the Pines that marked the 25th anniversary of the Oka Crisis.

“We haven’t disappeared,” said John Cree, a traditional Mohawk who led the march. “We’re still here.”

July 11, 1990, was the day that triggered the 78-day incident between Mohawks and the provincial police. The municipality of Oka's decision to expand a golf course onto the forest and cemetery claimed by Kanesatake Mohawks spurred a wave of resistance from First Nations communities across Quebec.

The summer of 1990 was a series of tumultuous confrontations that engulfed Mohawk warriors, the Sûreté du Québec and Canadian Forces.

On Saturday, First Nations and non-natives gathered to remember the violent events that launched a sleepy town and the plight of indigenous communities in Canada into international spotlight. Twenty-five years ago, the SQ raided and attacked the Mohawk camp — resulting in the death of SQ Cpl. Marcel Lemay.

“People wanted to kill us for this,” said Cree as he stood on the golf course grounds.

It was a really great thing we did back then, 25 years ago. There has been so much native movement since then that they are not afraid to stand up anymore. — **Mohawk warrior Piper**

The march wound through the Pines, the forest and road that sit next to the golf course, and through the town of Oka. This time, there were no barricades and no tear gas, but there were feelings of resistance, sadness, anger and reconciliation.

“It was a really great thing we did back then, 25 years ago,” said Piper, a Mohawk warrior who was present during the Oka Crisis. “There has been so much native movement since then that they are not afraid to stand up anymore.”

The march also brought forth familiar themes of sovereignty and First Nations rights in Canada.

“It belonged to our people,” Cree said. “All of these lands have been stolen from us and we’re still waiting for those lands to come back.”

The day included commemorative activities to remember the Oka Crisis, including speeches, a lacrosse game and a feast. Francine Lemay, the sister of the slain SQ officer, was also present.



Kanesatake Mohawks replace the 18th hole flag with Five Nations flag at the Club de Golf Oka in Montreal on Saturday, July 11, 2015. The Mohawks made a brief stop on the 18th green of the course during a march to mark the 25th anniversary of the Oka Crisis. Allen McNnis / Montreal Gazette

Kanesatake Grand Chief Serge Simon, who was 29 years old during the violent summer of 1990, said he lost his sense of belonging in the Pines after the Oka Crisis.

Now, he is working with Oka Mayor Pascal Quévillion to ensure the land remains untouched.

“Let’s be realistic: we’re not going anywhere. They are not going anywhere. Are we going to live in animosity and distrust forever? No. We can’t. No society can,” Simon said. “We got to find a way to live together in peace.”

The Oka Crisis ended in September 1990 when the barricades fell in return for an end to the golf course expansion and condominium development.

There is still work to be done to mend the relations between First Nations communities and Quebec society, said Geoffrey Kelley, the Quebec minister of native affairs.

“People ask me when will the Native question be solved,” Kelley said. “It will never be solved because it’s an ongoing challenge to reconcile different views and different opinions, but I think we made a lot of progress.”

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/quebec/remembering-the-oka-crisis-25-years-later>

Cree language used as secret weapon in WWII

Checker Tomkins' work was so highly classified he couldn't tell anyone ... for decades

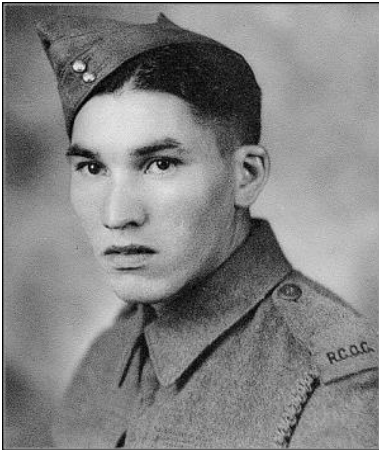
[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 14, 2015 6:30 AM MT Last Updated: Jul 14, 2015 6:35 AM MT



Film director Alexandra Lazarowich is making a 10-minute documentary about Second World War 'code talker' Charles 'Checker' Tomkins. (CBC)

When Checker Tomkins went off to war, he took with him a top-secret weapon the Germans knew nothing about.

The Cree language.



More than 70 years after Charles 'Checker' Tomkins served in the Second World War, his once top-secret story is being brought to life in a documentary film. (Supplied)

His work was so highly classified, even after the war ended he was under orders not to tell anyone - not even his own family.

Until recently, even Tomkins' own brothers had no idea he was involved in covert work.

"All that time, they were under an oath of secrecy," said Frank Tomkins. "And they honoured it. I never knew about it."

For that reason, and perhaps others, few people know about the role men like Charles "Checker" Tomkins played in the Allied victory during the Second World War.

Film director Alexandra Lazarowich hopes to change that. She's making a 10-minute documentary about Tomkins.

"This is an important story to tell," she said. "Because I feel like lots of aboriginal veterans in Canada have not been recognized by anyone, anywhere."

The role of the Navajo "code talkers" was brought to the big screen in 2002, in the Hollywood movie *Windtalkers*.

Lazarowich wanted to tell the story of Cree soldiers from Canada who played much same the role during the war.

"This kind of sacrifice and this kind of use of our language, I thought that more people need to know about this," she said. "Everyone knows the Navajo story, but we had our own guys in our own backyard who were doing this. Cree from Alberta and Cree from Saskatchewan."



The documentary crew was in Alberta recently to interview people for the film, including Checker's brother, Frank. (CBC)

Tomkins was from Grouard, Alta., about 170 kilometres northeast of Grande Prairie.

Smokey Tomkins said before his brother died in 2003, at age 85, he told the family some details about the messages the "code talkers" would pass back and forth.

"Numbers, of course," he said. "There's 14 bombers, you know, so they say the word fourteen.

"If they were referring to a mosquito bomber, you would use the word sakimes... sakimes in Cree is a mosquito."

Lazarowich hopes her film leads to more recognition for Checker Tomkins and other aboriginal veterans.

"I'd really love to see him get recognized by the Canadian government," she said. "And I'd also really love for him to get a Congressional Medal. Because the United States honoured all of their code talkers ... a few years ago."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/cree-language-used-as-secret-weapon-in-wwii-1.3150324?cmp=rss>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Aboriginal languages in Canada can and should be made official, expert says

First Nations leaders have been calling for official recognition for many years, says Onowa McIvor

By All Points West, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 11, 2015 1:24 PM PT Last Updated: Jul 11, 2015 1:25 PM PT



A call for official recognition of Canada's indigenous languages was made at the AGM of the Assembly of First Nations (Canadian Press/Michelle Siu)

Making all 60 indigenous languages in Canada official, along with English and French, is entirely doable, according to a University of Victoria expert.

The call for official recognition of First Nations languages was made by Perry Bellegard, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, at the organization's annual general meeting earlier this week.

Bellegard called on the federal government to invest in promoting, protecting and enhancing the country's aboriginal languages so that they won't die out.

Onowa McIvor, director of indigenous education at the University of Victoria, says the proposal has been made by First Nations leaders multiple times over the past few decades, but little has been done.

McIvor says it's high time the federal government take action, following [the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report](#), which recommended the federal government be responsible for language preservation.

"The government of the day, I'm not sure if there's much appetite there, but the Canadian public really are the people who should be concerned about this," McIvor told *All Points West*.

"These are their heritage languages as well, the original languages of this country, and I think we should all be concerned that they're not already official languages."

There are roughly 60 different indigenous languages spoken in Canada, and more than half of them are spoken in British Columbia, McIvor says.

Still, she says it's possible to have them all officially recognized nationally, but implemented at a regional level.

"It just doesn't make sense to do it any other way," she said. "There's such diversity across the country."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/aboriginal-languages-in-canada-can-and-should-be-made-official-expert-says-1.3147759>

Osheaga bans wearing of First Nations-inspired headdresses

[Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: July 13, 2015 | Last Updated: July 13, 2015 4:12 PM EDT



Osheaga issued a statement on Facebook to say it would be banning the wear of First Nations-inspired headdresses at the festival this year. Facebook

The Osheaga Arts & Music Festival announced Monday that it will no longer be permitting attendees to wear First Nations headdresses as accessories during the three-day festival at the end of July.

The festival posted a brief statement accompanied by a photo of a woman wearing a headdress, on their [Facebook page](#) saying:

The First Nations Headdresses have a spiritual and cultural meaning in the native communities and to respect and honor their people, Osheaga asks fans and artists attending the festival to not use this symbol as a fashion accessory.

The post received over a thousand 'Likes' and has been shared over 150 times in under half an hour.

The account organizers also told followers ÎleSoniq, the electronic music festival held in Parc Jean-Drapeau Aug. 14-15, will also be adhering to the same guidelines.

The wear of Native American-inspired headdresses and the ensuing cultural appropriation has been highly criticized in recent years since the culturally iconic accessory's appearance on fashion runways and in stores.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/osheaga-bans-the-wear-of-first-nations-inspired-headdresses>

Edmonton Folk Fest bans First Nations headdresses

By Paige Parsons, Edmonton Journal July 15, 2015 7:14 AM



Fans lay out their tarps on Gallagher Hill in anticipation of Edmonton's folk festival last year. Organizers have announced a ban on wearing First Nations headdresses at this year's festival.

The Edmonton Folk Festival has announced a ban on wearing First Nations headdresses at this year's festival.

In a Facebook post on Tuesday, the festival requested ticketholders refrain from wearing First Nation headdresses to show respect for First Nations culture.

“Such headdresses have a sacred, cultural meaning and we ask that you respect and honour that by not using them as a fashion accessory,” the post read.

Any headdresses that make it into the festival will be confiscated by security.

The move proved popular on social media, yielding over 500 ‘Likes’ by Tuesday evening. Most comments on the post were positive, though a few people did take umbrage with the ban.

“So does this mean no crosses as a fashion accessory? Christians may be offended. Where does this end? What is sacred to one may not be sacred to another. Please stop this insanity or we will have to go naked to the festival,” wrote Wendy McGee. But for every negative comment, several replies supporting the ban were posted.

“The cross is meant for everyone. A ceremonial headdress is not. Problem solved. You’re welcome,” wrote Jess Milke in response to McGee.

The move by Edmonton festival organizers comes in the wake of backlash at the Winnipeg Folk Festival over the weekend after a woman was spotted wearing a headdress. Osheaga, a Montreal music festival, announced its own ban on First Nations headdresses on Monday.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/entertainment/festivals/Edmonton+Folk+Fest+bans+First+Nations/11214380/story.html>

Liberal MP Joyce Murray says sorry for "sobriety" ad aimed at aboriginal grads

by [Stephen Hui](#) on July 15th, 2015 at 1:54 PM
SHARED 278 [9](#)



An advertisement in a First Nations newspaper has landed the Liberal MP for Vancouver Quadra in hot water.

The ad picturing Joyce Murray and encouraging "sobriety" for aboriginal high-school graduates ran in the *First Nations Drum*, which describes itself as "Canada's Largest First Nations Newspaper".

Jacqui Gingras, the NDP candidate for North Okanagan-Shuswap, questioned the ad on Twitter.

CBC reporter Connie Walker tweeted that newspaper staff, not Murray, wrote the ad.

Indeed, the newspaper is apologizing for its role in the matter.

Meanwhile, Murray has tweeted an apology for the "completely inappropriate" ad.

The MP also tweeted that she didn't approve the content.

Murray posted a longer version of her apology on Facebook:

Today I was made aware of a print advertisement published under my name, which included a completely inappropriate statement about Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

I would like to apologize unreservedly for the deeply offensive language in this advertisement.

I was not aware of this advertisement and did not approve of its content. However, I assume full responsibility for what has happened and I offer my most sincere apologies to all those who were offended by this comment.

Murray's apology followed a tweet from her criticizing Conservative MP Wai Young, whose [words about Bill C-51 and Jesus inspired the #CPCJesus hashtag](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/blog/490616/liberal-mp-joyce-murray-says-sorry-sobriety-ad-aimed-aboriginal-grads>

Why music festivals are banning First Nations headdresses

By [Sheena Goodyear](#) / [Daily Brew](#) – 19 hours ago



Osheaga bans attendees from wearing headdresses

The trend of wearing native-style headdresses as fashion accessories at music festivals appears to be coming to an end as organizers rush to ban the ceremonial items.

Feather headdresses have become hugely popular in recent years at music festivals around the world, [especially Coachella](#) in Southern California.

But they're quickly falling out of fashion amongst festival organizers who have faced widespread backlash for permitting the cultural appropriation of First Nations symbols.

Three Quebec festivals — Osheaga, Heavy Montréal and ÎleSoniq — [banned them this week](#).

This follows similar moves last year by [the Bass Coast festival](#) in Merritt, B.C., the [Tall Tree Festival](#) on Vancouver Island and [the Glastonbury Festival](#) in the United Kingdom.

"First Nations Headdresses have a spiritual and cultural meaning in the native communities and to respect and honour their people, Osheaga asks fans and artists attending the festival to not use this symbol as a fashion accessory," reads [a post on the festival's Facebook page on Monday](#).

Believed to have originated with the Sioux Indians and other tribes in the Great Plains regions, the feather headdresses, or war bonnets, are worn only by chiefs and warriors, with each feather indicating an act of bravery or heroism, [according to the American Indian Heritage Foundation](#).

In [An Open Letter to Non-Natives in Headdresses](#), Montreal Métis blogger Chelsea Vowel compares wearing a headdress for fun to sporting a war medal you didn't earn or faking a university degree.

In [an Interview with CBC Music](#), Ian Campeau of the aboriginal electronic music trio A Tribe Called Red described the trend as "redface."

The Winnipeg Folk Festival found itself [embroiled in controversy last week](#) when a woman was photographed at the show sporting a feather headdress and face paint. It has since vowed to ban the items in the future.

The Edmonton Folk Festival [quickly followed suit](#), even though it's never had a problem with people sporting the garment.

"We wanted to get well ahead of this," festival producer Terry Wickham [told the Edmonton Journal](#). "It's an obvious case of common sense and respect."

The Calgary Folk Festival, however, refuses to enact a ban, saying there's no need to a fix a problem that doesn't yet exist.

Executive director Debbi Salmonsén [told CBC](#) nobody has sported headdresses at the festival before, and she doesn't expect them to start.

"First Nations artists do not consider it respectful when people wear headdresses, which they are not culturally entitled to wear, so we would hope in respect for both our aboriginal audience members and artists that people will respect that," she said.

Public relations expert Stephen Murdoch, vice-president of Enterprise Canada, says the banning something deeply offensive for First Nations people is a smart move for festivals organizers. He urged them to stick to their guns.

"For concert promoters, it's a no-brainer to ban First Nation headdresses," Murdoch told Yahoo Canada News.

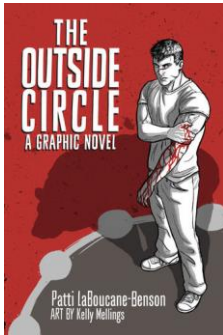
"From a public relations standpoint, festival promoters need to remain committed to their beliefs. If you have a policy in place banning First Nations headdresses, stick to the policy. The biggest issue for concert promoters will be communicating the ban to concert attendees."

Direct Link: <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/why-music-festivals-are-banning-first-nations-headdresses-192552892.html>

Graphic novel challenges Aboriginal stereotypes

Mischa Milne

Friday, July 10, 2015 9:18:46 MDT AM



Graphic novel *The Outside Circle* shatters perceptions about Aboriginal people.

The most powerful stories are often the ones that go untold. With the recent publication of *The Outside Circle*, a graphic novel set in Edmonton, a perspective too often overlooked is brought to light.

The graphic novel follows the story of Pete and his younger brother Joey. As a young Aboriginal man, Pete is caught in a cycle of poverty and gang violence in Edmonton's inner city. After being arrested for killing his step-father in order to protect his mother, Pete spends time in jail before being transferred to Drumheller, eventually ending up at the Stan Daniels Healing Centre. There, he participates in the In Search of Your Warrior program, an intensive historical-trauma-healing process for incarcerated Aboriginal men. Pete is eventually able to overcome the pain of his past and creates a positive future for himself; a sense of hope underpins the entire story, while simultaneously drawing attention to the complexity of the issues that Aboriginal people face on a daily basis.

What makes the story even more compelling is the painstaking detail and research that builds the novel's foundation. The author, Patti LaBoucane-Benson, is a Métis woman and the Director of Research, Training, and Communication at Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA). She has worked with NCSA for more than 20 years. *The Outside Circle* is more than just a story – it is her doctoral thesis published as a graphic novel, a form she chose over printing it as an academic paper.

"I wanted it to be more accessible, because academic papers aren't typically something that many people can read...the visual aspect of the novel is so essential," she said.

LaBoucane-Benson completed her PhD in Human Ecology from 2001 to 2009, focusing on Aboriginal Family Resilience, at the University of Alberta. Her doctoral research explored the way that providing historical trauma healing programs for Aboriginal offenders builds resilience for Aboriginal families and communities.

Throughout the novel, this research is woven into the challenges the characters face. Cyclical patterns of poverty, child welfare, single young parents, and unemployment are explored through their experiences. Perhaps most troubling are the statistics the novel highlights:

- 68 per cent of children in the welfare system in Alberta are Aboriginal
- 57 per cent of Aboriginal children in Canadian cities live in low-income families
- 27 per cent of Aboriginal children living off reserves have mothers between the ages of 15 and 24
- 35 per cent of Aboriginal children live with a single parent
- 40 per cent of Aboriginal people in Edmonton live in poverty

However, the intention of the novel was to depict the possibility of breaking out of those inter-generational cycles, a vision that is realized as Pete completes the Warrior program, reconciles with his past, discovers his true identity and in turn becomes an instructor of the program. *The Outside Circle* was a two-year process for LaBoucane-Benson and Kelly Mellings, the Edmonton-based illustrator who portrayed Pete's story. Mellings had worked with Native Counselling Services in the past through his graphic design company, Pulp Studios, and was honoured to take on the task.

To prepare for the work, he toured a former residential school, participated in sweats and smudging ceremonies, and taught art classes for Aboriginal children in the northern community of Tlicho, N.W.T.

"I wanted to make sure I was giving a true depiction of the story," he said.

Both Mellings and LaBoucane-Benson expressed a desire to challenge the perceptions many Canadians have when it comes to Aboriginal communities.

"The last residential school closed in 1996," LaBoucane-Benson noted. "We're not just talking about events that happened 200 years ago...we're talking about issues that are impacting First Nations people right now, today."

The In Search of Your Warrior program outlined in *The Outside Circle* was developed in Alberta through Native Counselling Services. According to NCSA's website, the program is grounded in a holistic Aboriginal philosophy: the belief that all things are connected and that for sustainable change to occur, an individual must engage the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of self in the changing/learning/healing process.

It has been recognized by Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) as an effective program that addresses the needs of the Aboriginal violent offender, and also implemented in other institutions in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Quebec. The product of a significant amount of experience, research, work, and care, *The Outside Circle* shows a side of the narrative that is rarely focused on in the ongoing discussion of Aboriginal peoples in Alberta: one of healing, growth, and progression forward.

Looking forward, LaBoucane-Benson said she would love to do another graphic novel and work with Mellings again.

Anyone who wishes to learn more about *The Outside Circle* can do so at <http://houseofanansi.com>. For more information on healing programs and the work that Native Counselling Services of Alberta does, visit <http://www.ncsa.ca>.

Direct Link: <http://www.leducprep.com/2015/07/09/graphic-novel-challenges-aboriginal-stereotypes>

Lakritz: More money won't save aboriginal languages

[Naomi Lakritz, Calgary Herald](#)

Published on: July 11, 2015 | Last Updated: July 11, 2015 3:00 AM MDT



Assembly of First Nations national chief Perry Bellegarde wants more money set aside for language preservation, but myriad programs to do just that already exist. Trevor Hagan / THE CANADIAN PRESS

If anyone thought that Perry Bellegarde would be a practical and pragmatic leader as national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, his foray this week into language preservation should have dispelled that illusion.

Bellegarde wants Canada's 60 or so aboriginal languages to be all declared "official" alongside French and English. Sorry, Chief Bellegarde, but the cost to the federal government to have every document, every report, every piece of letterhead and everything else translated into 62 languages would be astronomical. Not to mention logistically impossible. A civil servant's business card, for example, would have to be the size of a pizza box to accommodate 62 official languages.

Bellegarde said his "ultimate goal" would be to have translations of all those languages on consumer products. Again, logistically impossible, and economically unfeasible. No U.S. company exporting food to Canada is going to spend zillions of dollars to include 62 official languages on its products, and there'd be no room on any box or jar for all that.

His zeal to protect and preserve these languages, the majority of which are at serious risk of dying out, is completely understandable and well-placed. Languages are precious and they deserve to survive, for they represent the unique and irreplaceable way their speakers perceive and think about the world.

The AFN wants Ottawa to set money aside to revitalize these dying languages. The money would go to establishing a language institute, programs, immersion and other preservation and teaching initiatives. Yet, Ottawa has already done all that and more, so why is there a pretence that we have to start from scratch?

The programs and institutes Bellegarde is calling for already exist, and tremendous sums of money are spent annually on revitalizing and preserving aboriginal languages. The problem is being dealt with through an impressive array of initiatives and programs. The question is whether people are actually bothering to participate in them.

In B.C., for example, there is the First Nations Cultural Council, a "First Nations-run Crown corporation with a mandate to support the revitalization of aboriginal language ..."

There is First Voices, partly funded by Canadian Heritage, that promotes "language legacies celebrating indigenous cultures." First Voices provides such things as tutors, indigenous language apps, interactive dictionaries and online language labs. Five years ago, Ottawa announced it would quadruple funding for aboriginal language preservation in B.C. alone, including instructional material and youth language camps.

The government of the Northwest Territories has had an Official Languages Act since 1984, and its policy supports "various programs in support of community language activities and the development of aboriginal language programs for students and teachers."

The federal government's First Nation and Inuit Cultural Education Centres Program "funds approximately 100 First Nation ... centres to help preserve and strengthen their unique cultures, traditions and languages."

Nine years ago, Ontario established the Anishinaabek Mushkegowuk Onkwehon:we Language Commission "to support each of the 13 First Nation languages in Ontario." The federal government's Aboriginal Languages Initiative provides funding for community-based language preservation and teaching programs. A Mohawk immersion program exists in Quebec. Dogrib, Ojibwe, Cree and other indigenous language dictionaries are among the vast linked resources available through Alberta's Bearpaw Institute, including Cree flash cards and an Oji-Cree medical dictionary for health-care providers.

The University of Alberta's Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute holds an annual summer school to "train First Peoples speakers and educators in endangered language documentation, linguistics, language acquisition, second language teaching methodologies, curriculum development, and language-related research and policy-making."

Mount Royal University offers courses in Blackfoot and Cree. Aboriginal Head Start has taught indigenous languages to 9,000 First Nations children since 1998 at a cost of \$59 million a year.

How can all this not be enough? If languages are dying out and remaining unlearned despite the millions of dollars spent annually on teaching and preserving them, the problem is not a lack of multimillion dollar initiatives. At some point, people have to take advantage of the opportunities offered them. If they won't, that's not something more money and more programs can fix.

Naomi Lakritz is a Herald columnist.

Direct Link: <http://calgaryherald.com/opinion/columnists/lakritz-more-money-wont-save-aboriginal-languages>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

Aboriginal women lead the way in Canada's labour markets

TAVIA GRANT

The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Jul. 12, 2015 5:53PM EDT

Last updated Sunday, Jul. 12, 2015 10:23PM EDT

As a girl growing up with limited means, Krystal Abotossaway's aspirations were simple: to have a better life.

"My biggest dream was to go to postsecondary school. And afterwards, to have a great career," says Ms. Abotossaway, who is Ojibway, her father from Aundeck Omni-Kangung First Nation and her mother from Chippewas of Rama First Nation.

She became one of the first in her family to go to university, graduating from York University in 2013 with a degree in human resources management. The 23-year-old is now a talent sourcing specialist for Royal Bank of Canada, focusing on recruiting young aboriginal workers for the bank.

Her dream now? "My goal is to become senior in the private sector so that all industries are represented, and there are aboriginal people at the table, at the boards, and at those decision-making places. I think that's where I see myself."

Ms. Abotossaway is one of a growing number of aboriginal women who are transforming Canada's labour market, outperforming other groups in recent years and narrowing the gap in employment and participation rates along with wage growth.

Aboriginal women are "leading the way in labour markets," according to a recent Toronto-Dominion Bank paper that finds they have seen the "largest bounce back" in employment since the 2008-2009 recession, compared with aboriginal men and the non-aboriginal population.

They're also participating more in the labour market. The participation rate among aboriginal women rose by 1.2 percentage points between 2007 and last year – in contrast to declines among aboriginal men and the non-aboriginal population. (The study looked only at off-reserve trends due to limitations of on-reserve data. It says the off-reserve population accounts for nearly 70 per cent of the total).

What's more, many are landing good jobs. Employment growth has been "particularly high" in knowledge-based sectors such as finance, education and professional services, which tend to be higher-paying industries – a development the paper attributes to rapid increases in educational attainment.

"It's significant," said Brian DePratto, TD economist and author of the report. "On the employment side of things, and education attainment, these are strong growth rates. It's a strong story across the board."

That's not to gloss over some persistent gaps. Employment rates among aboriginal women are still below that of other groups, as are average weekly wages. Aboriginal women earned \$3,800 less, on average, last year than their non-aboriginal counterparts, partly because of over-representation in lower-wage sectors.

But these gaps are narrowing. Between 2007 and 2014, wages grew by 3.2 per cent on average among aboriginal women, faster than among non-aboriginal women and men, the paper said.

“I think aboriginal women have more opportunities now than ever before,” said Patricia Baxter, who works as an Ottawa-based consultant on aboriginal issues. She has been self-employed for two decades, and says she’s seen entrepreneurship, in particular, spike.

“I think it’s because they seem to be really understanding that to get out of their poverty situation, or they might be coming out of violence, that they have an opportunity to increase their incomes if they take it on themselves.”

The findings are an encouraging counterpoint to a narrative that is all too often “full of negative stories,” Kelly Lendsay, president and CEO of the Aboriginal Human Resource Council. “What I like about this story line is the trend message ... in some ways you can look back and say, that’s a reflection of the investments that have been made in the last 10 to 20 years. And it should reassure people that these public and private investments are actually generating the outcomes and the results that every Canadian wants.”

The range of fields aboriginal women are entering has seen rapid expansion, he says, from engineering and architecture to medicine, finance, law, politics and entrepreneurship.

The recession was disproportionately hard on aboriginal people in the labour market, with Statistics Canada research showing they faced sharper employment declines than their non-aboriginal counterparts.

But looking ahead, rising education levels and a young population should spell further improvements in the coming years, Mr. DePratto said.

“We’re all aware of credential inflation – that the best jobs require a good education. So you see a direct link: strong outcomes in postsecondary education at the BA level and above corresponds to a lot of the growth you see by sector as well, the growth in professional services, law... as aboriginal women become increasingly more educated, they are increasingly represented in these areas.”

The findings come after a sweeping report by Truth and Reconciliation listed recommendations on how to improve the lives of aboriginal peoples. Among them: that the corporate sector ensures they have “equitable access to jobs, training and education opportunities.”

“I would say they’re leading the way,” Mr. DePratto said. “The economic literature tells you parents, particularly mothers, play a very, very important role, in terms of decisions around children and their education as well. So you tend to see, as mothers get more educated, that tends to filter to children as well. It’s a real win-win both in the shorter and longer term perspective.”

Ms. Baxter, the aboriginal entrepreneur, still sees challenges: Less federal funding for aboriginal organizations has hurt progress, she says, while young people still need better access to training opportunities, particularly in more isolated communities. “I can’t really stress enough that I feel that this government has really reduced opportunities and development with aboriginal communities. I don’t think they’ve responded to aboriginal issues in a clear way. In fact, if anything, they’ve reduced them, so aboriginal communities, and organizations are really, really struggling to even keep their doors open,” she says.

Ms. Abotossaway would like to see more concerted private-sector efforts not just to recruit but to retain aboriginal workers – ensuring there is succession planning and a clear path for career development.

It hasn’t always been an easy road for Ms. Abotossaway. “There are definitely times of isolation. As I try to climb the corporate ladder and be identified as high potential or try to get into senior management, I don’t see representation of aboriginal people there – so I can’t really look at my own career path and [see where] it will lead.

“So as much as a trailblazer as I am, there’s sometimes the challenge of, how do I get to where I want to go, because I haven’t seen that as much in the private sector. That’s been the biggest challenge, to find role models. But my hope is, as I grow professionally, I can carve a path for some of my peers who may want to pursue careers in financial services.

“I’m very optimistic that we will carve these pathways for more aboriginal youth coming into the work force.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/aboriginal-women-lead-the-way-in-canadas-labour-markets/article25475691/>

Aboriginal women shake off unjust stereotype: Goar

Research by a bank economist shows off-reserve aboriginal women outperform all other groups in the labour market.



Lee Anne Cameron, right, an Okanagan Indian and an executive for Hydro One along with colleagues Shylo Summers, seated and Christine Goulais, left are examples of how aboriginal women with post-secondary educations are bridging the income gap between aboriginals and the rest of Canadians.

By: [Carol Goar](#) Star Columnist, Published on Sun Jul 12 2015

There is a little-known flip side to the requiem for Canada's missing and murdered aboriginal women.

It is a song of resilience. Since 2007 aboriginal women have outperformed every other group in the Canadian labour market. Their employment rate has risen. Their participation rate has gone up. Best of all, they are landing well-paying jobs in finance, real estate and education.

"This trend appears likely to continue," said [Brian DePratto](#), the economist at the Toronto Dominion Bank who made the surprising discovery. "As a result the aboriginal female population represents an emerging pool of skilled talent for Canadian employers."

Until DePratto's [research](#) was published on July 6, it was widely assumed that the earnings gap between Aboriginal Peoples and the rest of the population was sizable and persistent. That fed the perception First Nations were caught in an endless cycle of poverty, joblessness and family violence. So did the demand by the Native Women's Association of Canada for a national inquiry into disappearances and deaths of [1,750 indigenous women](#).

But at the family level, aboriginal women who had once accepted the inevitability of privation were telling their daughters to stay in school, get a stable job and break the century-old cycle. The millennial generation took this advice to heart, graduating from college and university in greater numbers than their male counterparts and narrowing the gap between themselves and non-aboriginal women.

As of 2011 (the latest year for which statistics are available) 35 per cent of aboriginal women had some form of post-secondary education, compared to 28 per cent for

aboriginal men. The rate for aboriginal women living off-reserve climbed to 46.6 per cent. That is just 6 percentage points below the rate for non-aboriginal women.

This progress translated into better job prospects and a higher standard of living. But the gains were not evenly distributed. Only 16.5 per cent of Inuit women got past high school. For women living in First Nations the rate was 31.2 per cent. For Métis women, it was 42.7 per cent.

Although urban aboriginal women fared best, DePratto is not convinced that indigenous peoples must leave their communities to succeed. “It (the report) argues for innovative education solutions that can reach people in these areas whether through distance education or other techniques,” he said in an interview.

His primary source of information was the 2011 [National Household Survey](#), a publication that has been analyzed by dozens of economists from the federal and provincial governments, academe, think-tanks and non-profit organizations. How did he spot the good news they missed?

DePratto thinks it might have something to do with expectations. “Before beginning the project, I had the notion that aboriginal women were seeing gains in employment, wages and so on. But (the evidence) was to a large extent anecdotal which often isn’t borne out in the data,” he explained. “It was great to see that the picture of the aboriginal female labour market was indeed as strong as I had been told.”

It took a lot of work to disaggregate the numbers in the [National Household Survey](#) (NHS). First he separated the genders. Then he subdivided the aboriginal population into various groups. Finally, he supplemented Ottawa’s voluntary census (the Conservative government [scrapped](#) the more reliable mandatory version in 2010) with other databases.

When he looked at the indicators, the pattern was unmistakable. Employment growth was stronger for aboriginal women than any other demographic group. Off-reserve aboriginal women were in the vanguard. They were moving rapidly into finance, insurance, real estate, professional services and education.

DePratto acknowledges that Aboriginal Peoples still face enormous challenges. Too many parents are in jail. Too many kids are under child protection. Too many communities lack decent housing, safe schools and clean water. Aboriginal men trail their non-aboriginal counterparts in employment and income by a sizable margin. Despite their progress, aboriginal women haven’t caught up to their non-aboriginal peers. But he remains optimistic. “The relatively young nature of the population suggests that these gaps will continue to close.”

This is a welcome counterpoint to the achingly familiar lament for Canada’s lost aboriginal women. It doesn’t atone for the mistakes of the past or fix the nation’s broken relationship with its original inhabitants. But it blows to smithereens the stereotype of aboriginal women as underachievers, prostitutes or victims.

Carol Goar's column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/07/12/aboriginal-women-shake-off-unjust-stereotype-goar.html>

Aboriginal Politics

A welcome push for native votes

The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Jul. 12, 2015 6:00PM EDT

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The growing movement among Canada's First Nations and Métis people to get out and vote in the federal election is an excellent development. Perry Bellegarde, the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, is among those urging indigenous people to make themselves heard this fall. So are other chiefs and various groups – with one significant difference.

Aside from Mr. Bellegarde, who is non-partisan, the majority of native chiefs and groups are urging their band members to vote strategically to defeat the Conservative government.

Thus, on the one hand, native voters are being encouraged by their leadership to exercise their franchise, something many have been reluctant to do on the mistaken belief the act of voting itself is contrary to native rights. On the other hand, they are being urged to narrow-cast their votes based on the demands of their leadership.

Native Canadians have often felt powerless, their treaties ignored and needs unmet. For the past 30 years, their chief recourse has been the courts. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recent conclusion that they are the victims of cultural genocide was a watershed moment, but whether the TRC's recommendations are ever implemented is, as always, a big question mark.

So if native Canadians can swing some ridings in this election, they will have spoken with a huge voice. The AFN has identified 51 constituencies where it believes native voters have the numbers to influence the outcome.

It would be a boon to all of Canadian society to have more native people directly involved in national politics (and provincial, and municipal). And if they choose to vote as a block and target the government of the day this time, that is of course their right.

But native Canadians, like all Canadians from every community, are individuals. Leaders may speak in their name and urge them to this way or that, but in the privacy of the ballot box, each man or woman is sovereign.

The real secret to influencing politicians is to vote this time, and the next time, and every time after that. Then they know they can't ignore you.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/editorials/a-welcome-push-for-native-votes/article25420708/>

3 N.W.T. First Nations mull electoral boundaries court action

Yellowknives Dene, Fort Resolution and Lutsel K'e bands oppose new Tu Nedhe riding amalgamation

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 13, 2015 6:51 AM CT Last Updated: Jul 13, 2015 6:51 AM CT



Tu Nedhe MLA Tom Beaulieu says he doesn't support adding Weledeh-speaking communities to his traditionally Chipewyan-speaking riding. (CBC)

A N.W.T. Supreme Court judge has set Aug. 12 as the date to hear [the City of Yellowknife's challenge](#) of current electoral boundaries.

Meanwhile, other groups that don't like the new electoral map are also mulling court action — but for different reasons from the city.

The Yellowknives Dene, Fort Resolution and Lutsel K'e First Nations — which are now lumped together in the same riding of Tu Nedhe — are opposed to the amalgamation for cultural reasons.

Tu Nedhe MLA Tom Beaulieu says Yellowknife isn't making that argument.

"If they're saying that Bill 18 [which established the new boundaries] is good but don't think it's gone far enough — and that's the indication I got from the mayor — then we're not supporting Bill 18 at all from Tu Nedhe," he said.

Beaulieu's traditionally Chipewyan-speaking riding was the smallest in the territory.

He says it doesn't make sense to make the Weledeh-speaking Yellowknives Dene part of it.

The Yellowknives, Lutsel K'e and Fort Resolution bands are hiring a lawyer to decide whether to join the Yellowknife challenge or mount one of their own.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/3-n-w-t-first-nations-mull-electoral-boundaries-court-action-1.3148844>

Premiers meeting in Labrador to focus on aboriginal issues, Muskrat Falls

Meeting begins Tuesday

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 14, 2015 10:32 AM NT Last Updated: Jul 14, 2015 10:59 AM NT



Premiers from most Canadian provinces and territories are meeting in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on Tuesday. (CBC)

Premiers from almost every province and territory in Canada are converging in Labrador Tuesday, with an agenda that emphasizes aboriginal issues.

Also on the agenda is a tour on Tuesday of the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric megaproject, which is under construction outside Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

The premiers are meeting with leaders from different aboriginal groups, including officials from the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, the Métis National Council and the Native Women's Association of Canada.

The sessions will give those leaders a chance to put Labrador issues front-and-centre on the national stage.

They'll be working on issues like [the report looking into residential schools](#), as some provinces are looking to act on the recommendations from the report.

However, the apology and compensation for residential schools has never included students from Newfoundland and Labrador, who are now suing the government.



Staff prepare prior to a meeting of the Canadian premiers in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, set for Tuesday. (CBC)

Missing and murdered aboriginal women is also expected to be a key topic, with all provinces agreeing [an inquiry is necessary](#).

Dawn Lavell Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, plans to lobby the premiers to act on the issue during Tuesday's meetings.

"The most pressing concern we have right now in our communities is the ongoing level of violence," Lavell Harvard said from Ottawa.

"We want to see concrete action. Policing, access to justice, equity and discrimination issues — we need to push the provinces to do more."

Todd Russell, president of the NunatuKavut Community Council, thinks it will be constructive to get the provinces involved in dealing with aboriginal issues.

"It's an opportunity for aboriginal people to share their concerns, their needs and their aspirations with a group of people that have some influence and a responsibility to build a relationship with aboriginal peoples," he told CBC's *Labrador Morning*.

"We hear aboriginal people say that the federal government must step up to the plate but there's also a role for provincial and territorial leaders — there's a responsibility there."

Muskrat Falls also on the agenda

The meetings in Labrador are also a chance to get other provinces interested in Newfoundland and Labrador's hydroelectricity. Ontario's Kathleen Wynne is expected to be one of the premiers touring the Muskrat Falls project on Tuesday.



The Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project will also be a topic of discussions at the premiers meetings. (CBC)

Russell said having the meetings in Happy Valley-Goose Bay is significant because they will take place near the \$8.6-billion project.

His group, representing about 6,000 Inuit-Métis in southern Labrador, has repeatedly said it wasn't properly consulted and is challenging the project in court.

The Nunatsiavut government has also raised alarms about how potential mercury contamination from flooding could affect Lake Melville, a food source for 2,000 Inuit.

The only premier not expected to attend is Nova Scotia's Stephen McNeil, and Saskatchewan's Brad Wall may not make it either, as he deals with a wildfire crisis in his own province.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/premiers-meeting-in-labrador-to-focus-on-aboriginal-issues-muskrat-falls-1.3150838>

"We're getting things done," Alberta Aboriginal Affairs minister taking action to implement UNDRIP mandate

[National News](#) | July 15, 2015 by [Brandi Morin](#) |



(Alberta's Attorney General and Aboriginal Affairs minister Kathleen Ganley standing in front of Legislature. Photo: Brandi Morin/APTN)

Brandi Morin

APTN National News

EDMONTON — Alberta's new Aboriginal Relations Minister Kathleen Ganley said she is excited to work toward taking the lead in repairing the relationship with Aboriginal communities in the province.

In an interview with APTN, Ganley said she believes that work started in June when her boss, Premier Rachel Notley, formally apologized for the province's role in residential schools.

Ganley is well aware that the relationship is in need of mending and admits it will take a lot of work from both sides.

"Given the history of the relationship and the discord that's occurred, and even going back further in time, the fact that we tore children away from their homes (we mostly just stood by) that's a huge problem," she said.

Ganley said the NDP government's backbone vision is to work to ensure that all Albertans are respected and included and that all have equal opportunity.

"That everyone has a chance to prosper in this province," she said. "And once we have built that trust I think we can work together to make sure that Indigenous people, like all Albertans, have access to basic services, livelihoods and a good quality of life."

Ganley is a labour and employment lawyer who has also worked in human rights and policy law.

She is brand new to politics and said she is taking every opportunity to learn about her new ministerial portfolios which also includes being the Justice Minister.

So far, it seems she is handling the tasks with the support of a collectively minded government.

“We’re getting things done. We’re all on the same page so it’s a great motivating tool.”

Premier Rachel Notley recently mandated all of her MLAs to begin looking at ways to implement the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Rights.

Notley declared the Alberta Government will work with Indigenous peoples as “true partners” to ensure their constitutional rights are protected; the air, land and water that all Albertans rely on is protected; and will work to build more prosperous, self-reliant and culturally strong communities.

It is an undertaking that Notley hopes will help create a renewed and improved relationship. MLAs are expected to report back by February 1, 2016 on how they will apply UNDRIP to their governing areas.

Ganley said the process will involve extensive consultation and in the coming months will travel the province to meet with various Indigenous peoples.

“We don’t want to implement our own view on our own. There’s going to be some places where there’s going to be some difficult conversations, particularly around land and land rights,” said Ganley.

The province is working on developing a memorandum of understanding with those involved, but it is a process that requires further development as they go about exploring this new endeavour.

“I think the most important part is to work directly with Indigenous peoples and communities to determine how they want to be involved and what they think consultation should look like.”

The new government plans to repeal the controversial Bill 22, the Aboriginal Consultation Levy Act introduced by the former PC Government that upset many First Nations who said they were not consulted.

The bill allowed the province to regulate consultation with industry over development on Aboriginal land.

Many First Nations boycotted the legislation last year.

“The problem with bill 22 was that it wasn’t implemented properly. That’s probably the biggest example of the flawed process that we are trying to avoid going forward. The process where the government decides, ‘ok, well here’s what we’re going to do’ and they just do it and their consultation is just to tell people that they’ve done it.”

The question of resource revenue sharing is one that Alberta First Nations hope to again start creating dialogue around.

A study conducted by Alberta chiefs showed that if First Nations shared in just 5 per cent of resource profits they would be self-sufficient. New Assembly of First Nations Chief Craig Mackinaw recently told APTN this will be a topic he will be addressing with the province.

Ganley said she is not opposed to discussions on resource revenue sharing, however the outcomes will depend on interactions that will require input from all government departments.

“We’re going to do a review and with everyone working together.”

The Metis will also be included in consultation discussions.

“The government doesn’t consult with the Metis the same as it does First Nations. We should be including them in those conversations. We have to move forward in a way that will be fair to everyone.”

In addition to backing a national inquiry into the missing and murdered Indigenous women, Ganley said the government is working to improve the lives and safety of Aboriginal women through various community-based initiatives.

She said it is a problem that the government takes seriously and said they won’t sit around to wait solely on a national inquiry.

“This is a critical issue that we need to move on now.”

Ganley highlighted some of the initiatives that the government is undertaking including support for the Moose Hide campaign aimed at taking a stand against violence towards Aboriginal women, working with human service organizations, women shelters both on and off reserve, helping women with addiction issues and supporting at-risk families.

Ganley concluded by saying she is looking forward to continuing to build a better relationship, and so far the reception she’s received has been good.

“I’m surprised. I felt very lucky that everyone has been so open and willing to work with us.”

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/07/15/were-getting-things-done-alberta-aboriginal-affairs-minister-taking-action-implement-undrip-mandate/>

National Inuit org prepares for fall AGM, presidential election

ITK presidential vote to be held Sept. 17 in Cambridge Bay

JIM BELL, July 14, 2015 - 7:15 am



Terry Audla wraps up the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami annual general meeting held June 6, 2012 in Kuujjuaq shortly after his election as president by 12 votes to one. Beside him is Duane Smith, ITK vice president and president of ICC Canada. Audla's three-year term expires this year. (FILE PHOTO)

With incumbent president Terry Audla's three-year term expiring this year, Canada's national Inuit organization is preparing for an annual general meeting and presidential election this September in Cambridge Bay.

To that end, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami will formally open the nomination period next week, ITK's director of communications, Erin Filliter, said July 13.

On July 20, ITK will formally issue a public call for nominations, with notices published in newspapers and a press release, she said.

Nominations for the president's job close Aug. 17. The election date is set for Sept. 17, at an annual general meeting to be held in Cambridge Bay.

[Audla won the president's position at an ITK AGM held June 6, 2012](#) in Kuujjuaq, when he defeated candidate Robbie Watt by 12 votes to one.

Under ITK Bylaw No. 2, which serves as a kind of constitution for the organization, ITK must hold an annual general meeting no more than 15 months after its last AGM and no more than six months after the end of its last financial year, which this year fell on March 31, 2015. (See document embedded below.)

ITK's bylaw sets out two ways of nominating candidates for ITK president:

- an Inuk individual may submit a written declaration of candidacy to the executive director, no fewer than 20 days prior to the election; and

- any one of ITK's four members may nominate an Inuk individual by submitting a written declaration of candidacy to the executive director, no fewer than 20 days prior to the election — with no stated requirement for 20 signatures.

ITK's four members are: Inuvialuit Regional Corp., Makivik Corp., Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Nunatsiavut Government.

Each of those members must name no less than two delegates to attend an ITK annual general meeting.

That means the ITK president is usually elected by a group of 12 people: the four member presidents and the eight delegates they choose to attend the AGM.

Under the bylaw, ITK's executive director serves as the returning officer for the presidential election.

But the organization's last permanent executive director, Stephen Hendrie, abruptly departed the job this past March.

In an interview, Filliter did not give a reason for Hendrie's departure. The top administrative job at ITK still lies vacant.

That means that for this election, ITK's acting executive director, Peter Geikie, who had been serving as head of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education, will also serve this year as returning officer.

At the same time, Heather Ochalski has stepped in, for the time being, as acting director of the Amaujaq education unit.

Filliter said ITK will provide more detailed information next week about its presidential election.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674national_inuit_org_prepares_for_fall_agm_presidential_election/

P.E.I.'s First Nations relations plugged by premier at meetings

Premier Wade MacLauchlan leads discussions on provincial-aboriginal economic development

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 16, 2015 7:26 AM AT Last Updated: Jul 16, 2015 7:26 AM AT



Premier Wade MacLauchlan is attending the annual summer gathering of premiers. (CBC)

Premier Wade MacLauchlan is plugging P.E.I.'s "good relations" with First Nations at the annual summer gathering of premiers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Premiers from across the country are meeting to listen and learn about issues affecting each region at the Council of the Federation.

MacLauchlan, one of four new premiers at the meetings, says one of the major topics being discussed is aboriginal issues, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, and the upcoming forum on murdered and missing aboriginal women.

"There are other issues around housing, education, and a social and economic action plan, especially for First Nations women. So various provinces have roles to be host or to lead aspects of that," said MacLauchlan.

"In the case of Prince Edward Island, we have very good relations with the First Nations communities on P.E.I. and are working together on economic development issues."

MacLauchlan says he's made it a priority to learn about other economic development and social initiatives across the country to potentially institute them in P.E.I.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/p-e-i-s-first-nations-relations-plugged-by-premier-at-meetings-1.3154326>

Premiers commit to commission recommendations after meeting with native leaders



Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Paul Davis said Canada's premiers support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations and will act on them with or without Ottawa's help (File Photo).

By Sue Bailey, The Canadian Press
Published Thursday, July 16, 2015 6:45AM CST

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, N.L. -- Canada's premiers support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations and will act on them with or without Ottawa's help, Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Paul Davis said Wednesday.

"We will together, jointly, make this happen," Davis told a news conference after hosting provincial and territorial leaders and the heads of five national native groups in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, N.L.

Davis said the provinces have not only pledged to act on the commission's 94 recommendations but, in some cases, have already started.

"They're important commitments that we need to follow up on."

Otherwise, what Davis described as the commission's important work could be wasted, he said.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's longstanding absence from first ministers' meetings is a missed chance for collaboration, Davis said.

"We all believe that the federal government should be providing that leadership. In the absence of the federal government, instead of just letting it sit and wait, we're going to take those steps."

Davis said Manitoba will host a second national roundtable on missing and murdered aboriginal women to follow up on last winter's event in Ottawa.

The RCMP has reported that almost 1,200 aboriginal women have been murdered or have vanished since 1980.

The 2011 National Household Survey suggests indigenous women make up 4.3 per cent of Canada's female population. But police say they're victims in 16 per cent of female homicides and account for 11 per cent of missing women.

The premiers made a united push last summer for a public inquiry into the issue but Ottawa has refused. Federal officials who attended the national roundtable in February said justice investments and a five-year, \$25-million plan to reduce related violence are a better approach.

Dawn Lavell Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, said she was pleased with Wednesday's meeting despite what she called a lack of respect from Ottawa.

Violence against indigenous women and girls is "a grave violation of human rights," Lavell Harvard told the closing news conference. She lashed out at the federal government for not attending.

"It is an insult to the memories of those women and girls that they're not here."

Lavell Harvard called it "a slap in the face."

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde said he was satisfied that the provinces are taking the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report released last month seriously.

It described as "cultural genocide" the suffering borne by generations of aboriginal children in once mandatory residential schools.

It estimated more than 6,000 boys and girls, about one in 25, died in the institutions. Scores of others endured horrific physical and sexual abuse.

Bellegarde said Canada must close the quality-of-life chasm between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.

"That gap is not good for our people. It's not good for the provinces, and it's not good for the country."

B.C. Premier Christy Clark said Ottawa funds vital programs on reserves such as education and early childhood development.

"Federal government plays a really important role in all of this," she said. "It's easier to do it with them, it's a lot better to do it with them. But we've been doing it alone, making those plans alone and making progress on our own for a long time."

An email statement from federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt's office on Wednesday said Ottawa has increased investment in First Nations education by 25 per

cent and constructed 41 new schools. It said the government has also given women living on reserves the same matrimonial rights as all Canadians.

Outside the meeting, a small group of protesters said Labrador has too often been stripped of its resources while the environment and social issues are neglected.

"Labrador lives count too," said Denise Cole, a Goose Bay resident with Inuit ancestry. "Just because we're a small population doesn't mean our lives count any less. It doesn't mean that we deserve any less. And it certainly doesn't mean that we get to be forgotten except when it comes time for an election or ... to show off for closed-door meetings."

The premiers will continue to meet Thursday and Friday in St. John's.

Direct Link: <http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/premiers-commit-to-commission-recommendations-after-meeting-with-native-leaders-1.2471884>

Notley says premiers focused 'on what we can do' in meeting with aboriginal leaders

[The Canadian Press](#)

Published on: July 15, 2015 | Last Updated: July 15, 2015 8:05 PM MDT



Alberta Premier Rachel Notley arrives for a meeting of Canadian premiers and national aboriginal leaders in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador on Wednesday, July 15, 2015. Andrew Vaughan / The Canadian Press

By Sue Bailey

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, N.L. — Violence against women and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report are on the agenda as Canada's premiers meet with aboriginal leaders Wednesday.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley echoed other leaders, who say the provinces can make some progress on their own, but the long-standing absence of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and federal officials from first ministers' meetings is not helpful.

Ottawa has jurisdiction over many of the education, justice and other areas touched on by the commission's 94 recommendations for change released last month.

"They're not here, so what we're going to do is focus on what we can do," Notley said on her way into the meeting in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, N.L.

"I suspect each province will be taking a look at the way in which they can move forward, share best practices and make sure that we make real progress on those recommendations.

"I think as national leaders we have an obligation to move forward."

B.C. Premier Christy Clark said Ottawa funds vital programs on reserves such as education and early childhood education.

"Federal government plays a really important role in all of this," she said. "It's easier to do it with them, it's a lot better to do it with them. But we've been doing it alone, making those plans alone and making progress on our own for a long time."

The sit-down is part of the annual Council of the Federation meeting.

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, is calling for action plans on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, and the number of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls.

The RCMP has reported that almost 1,200 aboriginal women have been murdered or have vanished since 1980, and that victims often know their attackers.

The 2011 National Household Survey suggests indigenous women make up 4.3 per cent of Canada's female population. But police say they're victims in 16 per cent of female homicides and account for 11 per cent of missing women.

Bellegarde said Harper's refusal to attend Wednesday's meeting sends a message about what the Conservative government thinks is important.

"It's a missed opportunity."

The premiers last summer made a united push for a public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls but Ottawa has refused. Federal officials who attended a national roundtable last winter said justice investments and a five-year, \$25-million plan to reduce related violence are a better approach.

Outside the meeting, a small group of protesters said Labrador has too often been used for its resources while the environment and social issues are neglected.

“Labrador lives count too,” said Denise Cole, a Goose Bay resident with Inuit ancestry. “Just because we’re a small population doesn’t mean our lives count any less. It doesn’t mean that we deserve any less. And it certainly doesn’t mean that we get to be forgotten except when it comes time for an election or ... to show off for closed-door meetings.”

The premiers will continue to meet Thursday and Friday in St. John’s.

Direct Link: <http://calgaryherald.com/news/politics/notley-says-premiers-focused-on-what-we-can-do-in-meeting-with-aboriginal-leaders>

Premier wants every cabinet minister to come up with plans to help protect rights and land of aboriginal community

By Jodie Sinnema, Edmonton Journal July 12, 2015



Premier Rachel Notley (far right) and her 11 cabinet ministers are sworn in on the legislature steps in Edmonton on May 24, 2015.

Premier Rachel Notley has sent a letter to her 11 cabinet ministers, asking them to review their ministries and come up with a plan and budget estimates on how they will implement the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“At its heart, the UN declaration encourages all of us to celebrate and preserve indigenous cultures and traditions, and to work alongside indigenous people to ensure they are participating in decisions that concern them,” Notley wrote in a letter dated July 7.

In it she instructs her cabinet ministers to come up with a plan to protect constitutional rights, aboriginal land and “self-reliant and culturally strong communities.” Ministry-specific mandate letters detailing priorities will be drafted this summer and sent out this fall.

The move follows a historic apology Notley extended in June to aboriginal people for the government’s silence on the damage done to children at residential schools. Notley also added her voice to calls for a federal inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

Under this new review, each ministry must work closely with indigenous leaders, including the Métis Nation of Alberta Association and the Métis Settlements General Council.

“The United Declaration sets some really good principles to sort of re-set the relationship” between indigenous peoples and government,” said Aboriginal Relations Minister Kathleen Ganley, who is in charge of co-ordinating the proposed plans. “We’ve had this relationship going back in time that has been historically rocky at times and I think we started by apologizing for our role in how we got to this place. Moving forward, we want to develop a more trusting relationship. ... They have the rights to preserve their culture, and health care and education on reserves are big issues that consistently come up.”

Ministers must submit their review of their department programs and legislation, including budgeting details, by Feb. 1, 2016.

“Our approach will be based on the principle that the bounty of Alberta’s resources must be shared by all Albertans,” Notley wrote. “I expect that the most challenging part of the discussion will be related to land and resources.”

Already, many aboriginal people work directly in the oilsands or benefit indirectly from Alberta’s resource-driven economy, the premier wrote. She said they want that work to continue, but they also want to protect the water, land and air.

“I believe there is balance to be found here ... so they are able to participate in a more meaningful way, and therefore benefit from, the development of natural resources in the province and the preservation and conservation of the environment.”

Work has already begun, Notley noted in the letter. Employees can’t discriminate based on race or ancestry. Schools will be introducing mandatory education to teach students about residential schools and indigenous culture, using curriculum developed with aboriginals, Ganley said.

“Because what we don’t want is the story of what we think happened because that’s not useful,” Ganley said. “The point is to have non-aboriginal people have a better understanding of aboriginal people.”

The province is also working to return sacred ceremonial objects from around the world back to Alberta communities. The Blackfoot Nation, for instance, is receiving financial and technical help to repatriate regalia of Chief Crowfoot, currently in a museum in Exeter, England.

About 221,000 aboriginal people, including Métis and Inuit, live in Alberta, or about six per cent of the entire provincial population, according to 2011 data from Statistics Canada. About 31,780 Métis call Edmonton home.

“Alberta recognizes in principles the inherent right of indigenous people to self government,” Ganley said. “For the future what we hope is a true government-to-government relationship. ... Like all Albertans, when indigenous peoples flourish, the whole province flourishes and vice versa.”

- See more at:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Premier+wants+every+cabinet+minister+come+with+plans+help+protect+rights+land+aboriginal+community/11200991/story.html#sthash.OenOgayI.dpuf>

Metis elders seek federal government help

By Betty Ann Adam, The StarPhoenix July 11, 2015



'Our nation is broken,' says Metis Senator Nora Cummings.

The Metis Nation-Saskatchewan (MNS) has had many ups and downs during its 42-year history, but it's never been lower than it is now, says Metis senator Nora Cummings. Cummings and other Metis elders are sidestepping their bickering elected leaders and calling on the federal government to fund two provincewide meetings of grassroots Metis and to provide an independent third party to run them.

"Our nation is broken. Our people are sad," Cummings said Friday outside Saskatoon Court of Queen's Bench where MNS president Robert Doucette had asked the court to find vice-president Gerald Morin and other elected members of the Provincial Metis Council (PMC) in contempt of court. "I've watched (MNS) have its issues but I've

never see it as low as I see it today," Cummings said.

Justice Brian Scherman reserved his decision in the latest skirmish in a court battle that has been going on between the two factions since December.

The discord had already led, in November 2014, to the loss of the group's federal funding after repeated failures to hold constitutionally required Metis Nation Legislative Assemblies. The organization closed its doors March 30.

Scherman ordered in April that an assembly be held by June 19, after finding the MNS would suffer irreparable damage if the meeting was delayed until September, as Morin and the PMC planned.

On Friday, Scherman decided it is too late now to meet the June deadline and the September date might as well stand. He gave the parties until the end of July to provide case law as he considers

whether Doucette has proven Morin's group intended to defy the court order. "I'm quite happy, actually, with what happened today," Morin said outside court.

"(The court) sees that people have made reasonable efforts to do what's best by Metis people," Morin said.

Doucette said Metis people need their organization, especially now as many have been forced from their communities by wildfires. Doucette called on the federal government to ensure he and Morin are both involved in discussions pertaining to the MNS, rather than meeting with Morin alone and giving Doucette second-hand information afterwards.

He said he has written four times to Aboriginal and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) with a proposal to keep the MNS afloat until funding is restored. He suggests that all politicians vacate the MNS office, that

AANDC pay the lease and install a community-based board to operate the Metis membership registry. He doesn't rule out third-party management, if that's what it would take. He has received no reply, he said.

AANDC did not provide a response to a StarPhoenix inquiry Friday.

"No court in the land is going to settle this dispute. I see it now," Cummings said.

"The Metis people of Saskatchewan are in crisis. We are speaking on behalf of our elders, our youth and the Metis people at large. ... The political disruption that has incapacitated our governance organization has gone on long enough."

She said petitions are circulating across the province calling for the federal and Saskatchewan governments to support an MNLA and annual general meeting to be held in Saskatoon.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/Metis+elders+seek+federal+government+help/11206821/story.html>

Aboriginal Sports

Pan Am Games: Five indigenous acts you should see

From music artists to visual artists and comedians the Aboriginal Pavilion has something for everyone

By Kim Wheeler, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 11, 2015 10:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 11, 2015 10:00 AM ET



Michelle Thrush in Find Your Own Inner Elder (Facebook)

It is being billed as the largest Indigenous arts, culture and sports festival ever. The Aboriginal Pavilion is a 17-day celebration that runs concurrent to the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games in Toronto.

But with this many days to take in the festival, where does one begin? CBC Aboriginal has the answer for you.

Here are our recommendations:

The Arts Marketplace



Loretta Gould's painting "Guided by the Light." (Loretta Gould)

The Arts Marketplace is open daily at 11 a.m. and kicks off July 13 at the Fort York Historic Site. There will be a lot of artisans and craftspeople with their wares. If you want to own an authentic piece of art, clothing or a dreamcatcher that hasn't been mass-produced and culturally appropriated then this is the place you should head.

While you're there take a look for up-and-coming painter Loretta Gould. This Mi'kmaq artist made a living making quilts. Then in 2013, her sewing machine broke and she took up painting. Gould uses bright, bold colours to depict "her spiritual feelings on canvas," according to her bio.

Comedy Night

On July 19, comedy troupe The 1491s take over the mainstage at the Cultural Village at Fort York. This sketch group of comedians is best known for the YouTube videos they make. One of their most popular ones entitled "Slapping Medicine Man" has over 750,000 views. But the video that kicked off The 1491s career is the "New Moon Wolf Pack Audition." Hilarity ensues.

You can see their brilliance starting at 6 p.m. at Fort York.

Find your own Inner Elder

Michelle Thrush is best known for her edgy and dark character Gail Stoney in the TV series *Blackstone*. But did you know she also has a comedic side? Thrush tours around First Nations communities and events with her one woman show *Find Your Own Inner Elder*.

Thrush bravely dons clothing and make-up to age her while she takes you on a journey of her own memories and the impact her grandmother had on her. She transforms herself from a child to an old Cree woman. Using comedy to break down barriers she doles out sage advice to audience members while they look for their own "Inner Elder."

You can catch the Gemini Award winning actress from July 17 - 19 on the West Stage of the Aboriginal Pavilion at various times.

Paddle Song with Cheri Maracle



Cheri Maracle performs in the solo show Paddle Song.

This musical theatre piece was written by Dinah Christie and Tom Hill. It stars Mohawk Cheri Maracle in a one-woman show about E. Pauline Johnson - a Mohawk poet from the late 1800s who was ahead of her time. In a time that women rarely travelled alone, Johnson did just that for over 30 years.

Paddle Song encapsulates Johnson's early life from paddling along the Grand River in her home that is now Six Nations in Ontario to earning her place along the literati across North America and Great Britain.

Paddle Song hits the West Stage on July 22 at 4:15 p.m.

Electric/World Fusion/Classical Night



Classical guitarist Gabriel Ayala performs July 24th. (DeezMas Photography)

Gabriel Ayala, a Yaqui from southern Arizona, brings his unique guitar stylings to Canada. The inventor of jazzmenco, a blend of jazz and flamenco, Ayala has performed around the world. With 10 CDs under his belt, Ayala's music is perfect for hot summer nights.

He performs on July 24 along with Iskwé, Cris Derksen and Quetzal Guerrero beginning at 7 p.m.

Tune in to Unreserved on CBC Radio One after the 5 p.m. news in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Nunavut, and after the 4 p.m. news in Yukon and the N.W.T. for more artists performing during the Pan Am Games.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/pan-am-games-five-indigenous-acts-you-should-see-1.3146723>

Alberta Indigenous Games all about participation

Third biannual competition will find teams for interested individuals

By Evan Davits, Edmonton Journal July 10, 2015



Marnie Ross, manager of the Alberta Indigenous Games, stands in Rundle Park, which will be the site of several events during the July 12-16 multi-sport event.

EDMONTON - The Alberta Indigenous Games is not your typical sporting event.

Registration for the games at Rundle Park will remain open for the entire event from July 11-16 to present as many opportunities for indigenous youth to participate.

“The heart of our games is to make the circle of participation as big as possible and to remove all barriers for indigenous youth,” said Marnie Ross, the manager of the Alberta Indigenous Games. “We invite individuals to come and register. We’ll put them on a team. We’ll find them a coach.”

The third biannual competition will welcome hundreds of indigenous youth from all parts of the province to participate and compete in volleyball, basketball, ball hockey, archery, canoeing, golf plus track and field.

“We not only promote athletic development,” said Ross. “We also promote the intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual side of sports.

“It’s the only multi-sport, provincial-wide sporting event for indigenous youth in Alberta.”

The Games also provide a sense of community and erase possible barriers for aboriginal youth between the ages of 12 and 20.

Monique Makokis, 16, an honorary youth ambassador for the Games and athlete recruiter extraordinaire, says her participation as a volleyball player two years ago allowed her to network and meet people her age.

“I did grow up just being the only child,” said Makokis, who was named Miss Teen Alberta at the 2014 Miss Canada Globe Pageant.

She trains and teaches a volleyball team in her hometown of Wetaskiwin. She also works with troubled youth in Maskwacis, assisting them with anything sports related, as well as problems involving suicide. Now, she says she's humbled to be a role model for indigenous youth in Alberta.

Athletes are rewarded for winning at the Games. However, in keeping with tradition and culture, the Games also recognize those athletes who most exemplify the values of the Circle of Courage, a traditional First Nations model of youth development and empowerment. Therefore, the games will end with the presentation of medals and the Circle of Courage awards.

"The games provide a safe and healthy place for people to make friends, for athletes to learn about sport and, because we follow the Circle of Courage model in our sport programming, we try to infuse different values within all of our sports and special events," Ross said.

Depending on the turnout in each sport, organizers will determine whether the tournaments will be either a round robin or double-elimination format.

The basketball, ball hockey, golf and volleyball tournaments will take place over the course of two days, with basketball, ball hockey and golf starting on Monday. The volleyball tournament will take place on Wednesday and Thursday. Archery plus track and field are on Wednesday and canoeing is on Thursday.

Schedule of events

Here's a look at some of the other events that will take place during the Games:

9 a.m. Sunday — Eagle staff run: Similar to the Olympic torch, the sacred eagle staff will be carried from St. Albert to Rundle Park by a group of indigenous athletes. The traditional eagle staff is donned with eagle feathers and its arrival marks the official beginning of the games. "It's about generating excitement and starting our games in a traditional way by bringing in our sacred objects into the circle," said Marnie Ross, manager of the Games.

Sunday 2-4 p.m.— Opening ceremonies: Similar to a Pow Wow, they commence with the arrival of the eagle staff

Monday 6-8 p.m. — Entertainment stage: The talents of aboriginal youth are showcased.

Tuesday 6-8 p.m. — Buffalo bundle games: These eight traditional indigenous games, hosted by Tim Eashappie, a knowledge keeper, teacher and elder from southern Saskatchewan, are challenging games meant to simulate the group of skills required to be a good buffalo hunter. For example, one game tests a participant's ability to throw a spear through a moving target.

Wednesday 6-8 p.m. — Talent show: The popular indigenous rapper, Drezus, is featured.

Thursday 4-6 p.m. — Closing ceremonies: Included are the presentation of medals and Circle of Courage awards. There will also be a round dance.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Alberta+Indigenous+Games+about+participation/11205740/story.html>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Five Tsimshian First Nations take step to monitor development in their territories

Environmental stewardship authority set up to evaluate effect of resource projects

By Gordon Hoekstra, Vancouver Sun July 9, 2015



The view looking down the Douglas Channel from Kitimat, an area home to several proposed resource projects.

Five Tsimshian First Nations have formed an environmental stewardship authority in response to increasing industrial development pressures in northwest B.C.

The authority will be able to help evaluate the effect of industrial projects and provide advice and support to its community members.

The First Nations that are part of the environmental stewardship authority are: Metlakatla, Gitxaala, Kitselas, Kitsumkalum and Gitga'at.

Their traditional territory in northwest B.C. is subject to several proposed major liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects and also port development, run-of-river hydro power projects and mining.

“We thought it would be really great to come out with a singular voice, a collective voice — and it would be very strong,” Kitselas chief councillor Joe Bevan said in an interview.

Added Gitxaala Chief Clarence Innis: “Bak Laansk — working together — is at the core of our Tsimshian culture. With the Tsimshian Environmental Stewardship Authority, we are working together to protect our most important resource: our environment.”

The First Nations said the authority is interested in working with the Lax Kw’alaams, another Tsimshian First Nation in northwest B.C., as well as the provincial and federal governments and project developers.

Bevan, the Kitselas chief, said the First Nations would pool their resources to support the authority. The First Nations already have their own resource and environment technical staff, but will add staff for the authority when needed, he said.

Bevan expected that government and project developers will also provide funding through project capacity agreements.

The First Nations said the responsibility to evaluate and manage the effects of development remained with individual First Nations; however, the authority will provide a venue for First Nations to come together to address common environmental stewardship issues such as cumulative effects.

A key issue around LNG projects near Prince Rupert is protecting salmon in the Skeena River estuary, noted Bevan. (The Lax Kw’alaams recently rejected a \$1.15-billion benefit package offer from Pacific NorthWest LNG and the province over salmon concerns).

The authority will be able to provide expert advice on baseline scientific studies that evaluate the current state of the environment and environmental monitoring programs, and provide information to community members on potential effects of projects.

The authority will also help determine how to address environmental effects and strengthen oversight in federal and provincial environmental reviews by supporting First Nations involved in the reviews.

First Nations in northwestern B.C. have raised concerns about the pace of industrial development on their traditional territories and their ability to assess this development.

The traditional areas of the five First Nations encompass an area that includes the Skeena River downriver from Terrace, 100 kilometres from the coast, as well as the Prince Rupert area and the mouth of the Douglas Channel west of Kitimat.

The area is home to several proposed major LNG projects, including Pacific NorthWest LNG, led by Malaysian state-controlled Petronas. The project's value, including a terminal near Prince Rupert, a pipeline and investment to extract natural gas in northeastern B.C., is estimated at \$36 billion.

There are also two major LNG proposals in Kitimat led by Shell and Chevron, and their associated pipelines.

Also on the proposal list are a geothermal energy plant, an industrial development park, a bio-coal plant, several run-of-the-river hydroelectric projects, a container terminal expansion and a potash terminal.

In response to the announced environmental stewardship authority, the British Columbia LNG Alliance said it knows that environment is a key issue for First Nations.

“The BC LNG Alliance shares the same view and looks forward to continued dialogue with all Tsimshian First Nations regarding environmental stewardship and how best to incorporate First Nations interests into the existing environmental assessment framework and processes,” said David Keane, president of the BC LNG Alliance.

The alliance represents seven LNG projects, including the projects led by Petronas, Shell and Chevron.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/Five+Tsimshian+First+Nations+take+step+monitor+development+their+territories/11202278/story.html>

Kivalliq Inuit Association, Agnico Eagle ink Meliadine benefit agreement

KIA president hopes to see 50% of jobs at mine filled by Inuit beneficiaries

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 14, 2015 6:48 AM CT Last Updated: Jul 14, 2015 1:21 PM CT



David Ningeongan, president of the Kivalliq Inuit Association, and Jim Nasso, Agnico Eagle's chairman, celebrate the signing of an Inuit impact and benefit agreement for Agnico-Eagle's proposed Meliadine gold mine near Rankin Inlet. With the agreement signed, the company has made a payment of \$1.5 million to the KIA. (Agnico-Eagle Mines Ltd.)

The Kivalliq Inuit Association and the owner of a proposed gold mine near Rankin Inlet have signed an agreement calling for jobs and other benefits for Inuit beneficiaries.

The KIA inked the Inuit impact and benefit agreement with Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. on Monday in Rankin Inlet, which is located 24 kilometres from the project.

The agreement comes after more than three years of negotiations. Details are being kept under tight wraps, as is standard with such agreements, but in general they call for jobs, training, contract opportunities for local businesses and payments.

An initial payment of \$1.5 million will be made to the KIA now that the agreement has been signed.

David Ningeongan, the president of the Kivalliq Inuit Association, says it's hoped that up to 50 per cent of the jobs at Meliadine will eventually be filled by Inuit beneficiaries. About 30 per cent of people currently working at the Meliadine site are Inuit, he says.

The Nunavut Impact Review Board granted Agnico Eagle the project certificate for Meliadine earlier this year, though the certificate came with 127 conditions. A decision to build the mine has not been announced.

Agnico Eagle operates the Meadowbank gold mine near Baker Lake.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/kivalliq-inuit-association-agnico-eagle-ink-meliadine-benefit-agreement-1.3150835>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Confusion reigns on aboriginal rights when court rulings meet reality

JEFFREY SIMPSON

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Saturday, Jul. 11, 2015 3:00AM EDT

Last updated Friday, Jul. 10, 2015 1:36PM EDT

A year and a bit later, people with good intentions and big brains in British Columbia are still trying to figure out the impact of the latest Supreme Court aboriginal-rights decision.

Learned law articles have been penned. Certain aboriginal spokesmen have told the provincial government, as a consequence of the decision, to recognize aboriginal title everywhere and get on with it. Resource companies and other private-sector enterprises don't quite know what to make of the Tsilhqot'in decision.

Tsilhqot'in essentially recognized aboriginal title over a swath of territory for a previously nomadic aboriginal group. In this territory, with a few restrictions, the group now has de jure sovereignty, a precedent that, if extended over time, would leave B.C. pockmarked with little self-governing, largely sovereign aboriginal territories over which the Crown's writ would barely run.

What's clear about the Tsilhqot'in decision – and the long trail of previous aboriginal-rights cases – is that it makes for steady and remunerative work for lawyers. Essentially, the courts, and especially the Supreme Court of Canada, are making laws in this field.

Judge-made law, not political decision-making or government-to-First Nation negotiations, is setting the rules and then changing them with each new court decision.

The justices of the Supreme Court view issues from 35,000 feet. Their knowledge of on-the-ground realities is perforce limited and their interest in the actual or potential impacts of their decisions seems equally limited.

The aboriginal rulings are reminiscent of former justice Bertha Wilson's comment in her famous *Singh* decision on refugee-determination policy when she dismissed possible complications flowing from her ruling as matters of "administrative inconvenience." That "inconvenience" actually produced years of complication and chaos, huge financial costs, large backlogs and, of course, more work for lawyers.

Harry Swain, a long-time federal deputy minister, and James Baillie, senior counsel with Torys LLP, recently underscored concern about the Supreme Court's lack of concern for actual or potential on-the-ground realities.

In a carefully argued article in the *Canadian Business Law Journal*, they wrote that given the court's enormous responsibility as the "ultimate adjudicator" that "considerations such as economic implications and political outcomes should be relevant to the judicial process, even if not determinative. It is troubling to us that no reference is made in the court's decision to such possible implications." Instead, they describe the Tsilhqot'in decision as a "technical treatise on the law, with didactic overtones."

Dwight Newman, a law professor at the University of Saskatchewan and a constitutional-law expert (and long-shot candidate for the Supreme Court of Canada), also worries about the gap between the court's legal rulings and on-the-ground reality. In an excellent survey of recent aboriginal law cases for the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, he observed

that “for a variety of reasons, including from non-aboriginal Canadians with certain perspectives on environmental and other matters, it has become extremely difficult to get major infrastructure projects done in Canada. Amongst others, the impacts of aboriginal title and of the duty to consult on long linear infrastructure projects are subject to an immense lack of clarity.”

Everyone who comments on aboriginal affairs, and courts that legally define them, agrees that negotiations are better than litigation. In B.C., however, the Treaty Commission that was supposed to bring about treaties throughout the province has been an almost complete flop.

The provincial government has all but given up on the commission process, as have the majority of aboriginal groups. What seems to be happening “on the ground” is twofold: Companies and aboriginal groups are getting on with negotiating deals (“muddling through,” as one astute B.C. observer said), with little attention being paid to Supreme Court rulings, while some of the more vocal provincial chiefs talk up court rulings, heap more demands on the governments and, in a few cases, head back to the courts seeking further expansion of aboriginal rights.

A gap exists in B.C., as elsewhere in Canada, between chiefs who receive a lot of publicity and are therefore prone to exaggerated and colourful rhetoric, eagerly reported by the media, and other, mostly younger chiefs, who want development because their communities desperately need training, jobs and incomes.

A big summit of chiefs and the provincial government is scheduled for the fall. A previous one, not long after the Tsilhqot’in decision, was more heavy-duty rhetoric than substance. We’ll see if the next one is any different.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/confusion-reigns-on-aboriginal-rights-when-court-rulings-meet-reality/article25413801/>

First Paddle for the Peace since Site C approval carries added weight

Registration for 10th annual Paddle for the Peace begins 9 a.m. July 11

[Jonny Wakefield](#) / Alaska Highway News
July 10, 2015 04:45 PM



When paddlers pull their canoes and kayaks from the Peace River this Saturday, they'll do so with an added sense of gravity.

The first Paddle for the Peace since the Site C dam was approved last December, organizers expect this year's event to be among the largest in its ten year history. With construction on the \$8.8 billion dam slated to begin in the middle of July, emotions are expected to run high.

"I think there are more people who are more aware [of Site C] and more anxious about what's going on, a little more upset as well," said Andrea Morison, an organizer with the Peace Valley Environment Association.

The fact that the dam is going forward, barring a legal upset, has added new significance to the paddle.

The area where paddlers remove their boats, Bear Flats, will be underwater if the dam is built downstream. Bear Flats is just a stone's throw from the home of Peace Valley Landowner Association (PVLA) president Ken Boon, who will lose his property if the dam goes through.

The PVLA's lawsuit to revoke the dam's environmental approval failed in provincial court last week. Another six lawsuits from landowners and First Nations still have a chance of halting or delaying construction, which could begin by the middle of the month.

That's led to increased interest in the paddle, said Morison.

"I'm getting a lot of interest from a lot of people, and I got a lot of firm interest very early on in the planning this year compared to other years," said Morison. "I'm expecting a pretty good turnout, people from across the province."

This year will see keynote speeches from Richard Bullock, the recently fired chair of the B.C. Agricultural Land Commission, as well as Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs Grand Chief Stewart Phillip and Assembly of First Nations B.C. Chief Shane Gottfriedson.

Paddlers put in around noon at the confluence of the Peace and Halfway Rivers, while registration runs from 9 a.m. to 11:30. Last year's paddle attracted between 400 and 500 people.

The paddle will be followed by events put on by the West Moberly and Halfway River First Nations.

Morison said that despite Site C's approval, showing up to protest events is still vital for those opposed to the dam.

"We need to show our politicians by coming out physically to events like this that [Site C] is really not the way to go," she said.

- See more at: <http://www.alaskahighwaynews.ca/fort-st-john/first-paddle-for-the-peace-since-site-c-approval-carries-added-weight-1.1997233#sthash.Y3q6BoGh.dpuf>

Mount Polley restart ignores water concerns: First Nations

B.C. is allowing a partial reopening of mine that had catastrophic dam failure last summer

By Gordon Hoekstra, Vancouver Sun July 13, 2015



The Mount Polley mine, near Likely, is being allowed to partially restart.

The T'xelc and Xatsull First Nations say they are extremely disappointed that the B.C. government has allowed Imperial Metals to partly restart the Mount Polley mine.

The First Nations contend that allowing the gold and copper mine to reopen is premature, ignores their concerns and could place their and other communities at risk.

The B.C. government announced last week the mine will be allowed to restart at half capacity while Imperial Metals prepares plans for the short-term and long-term discharge of mine waste water.

The mine in the Interior has been closed since last summer when its mine-waste storage dam failed, releasing millions of cubic metres of water and waste rock containing potentially-toxic metals in the Quesnel Lake watershed.

“I strongly feel they are not listening. We had a team of experts working on our behalf. They continually put forth our concerns (to the B.C. government), and I don’t see any long-term plans (to address those concerns),” T’xelc (Williams Lake) First Nation chief Ann Louie said in an interview Sunday.

Louie said the First Nations will make a case for their concerns, including that the province is not honouring an agreement to make decisions jointly, at a meeting scheduled for July 22.

However, Louie did not rule out taking some kind of court action if the province doesn’t start listening to their concerns.

In a written statement on Sunday, mines ministry spokesman David Haslam said the First Nations’ concerns will be addressed during the review of the company’s application for a short-term water discharge permit.

The government’s new conditional permit allows Mount Polley to extract four million tonnes of ore and dump the liquid waste stream — known as tailings — into an unused hole called Springer Pit. The mine’s existing, failed, tailings dam can’t be used.

The government is requiring Mount Polley to submit a short-term plan to treat and discharge water by this fall, and a long-term plan by next June 30, if the mine is to remain operational.

Xatsull (Soda Creek) First Nations chief Donna Dixon said there are still too many unanswered questions to issue a restart permit.

An expert engineering panel appointed by the B.C. government concluded earlier this year that the company’s “lack of foresight” in planning for the dam’s future water levels contributed to the breach of its tailings pond wall on Aug. 4, 2014.

The panel said the cause of the breach was a design flaw that failed to recognize a weak glacial soil layer beneath the dam, but other factors that contributed were a dam slope that was too steep, and too much water backlogged behind the walls.

Dixon said, in a written statement, the First Nations were shocked the government would make this decision while investigations by conservation officers and the chief inspector of mines are continuing.

In announcing the restart last week, B.C. Mines Minister Bill Bennett noted it would allow about 220 workers to return to their jobs. The mine, near Williams Lake, should be operating within 30 days with half its usual workforce, said the company.

Imperial Metals has said it may have to build a water treatment facility, which can be expensive.

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Mount+Polley+restart+ignores+water+concerns+First+Nations/11208937/story.html#ixzz3fsk3aZ5b>

Chief says Edmonton sits on stolen Indian land, hopes to reconcile past wrongs

[National News](#), [Uncategorized](#) | July 14, 2015 by [Brandi Morin](#)



(Members of Papaschase band in the Fort Edmonton area, circa unknown. Courtesy: Papaschase band website)

Brandi Morin

APTN National News

EDMONTON — Long before the City of Edmonton was established, there lived an Indigenous tribe since time immemorial.

Then in the late 1800's the Federal Government moved in to settle the area, and soon after used coercion and fraud to displace the Papaschase Band and steal their lands, said Chief Calvin Bruneau.

He said what happened has been lost in the city's consciousness, however the Papaschase people are still alive and well today.

"The government wants it forgotten, but it's always been kept alive in families," said Bruneau.

"We are asserting our own sovereignty and saying we never surrendered the lands."

His ancestors lived in what is now the Rosedale Flats and River Valley area in Edmonton and were designated a reserve of approximately 60 square miles upon signing Treaty 6.

The reserve stretched across the North Saskatchewan River and into what is now Edmonton's south side. As the area began to grow settlers became uncomfortable with living so close to an Indian band and sent petitions to Ottawa to have them removed.



Papaschase Chief Calvin Bruneau. Photo: Brandi Morin/APTN

"They didn't want the reserve too close to development. They said they didn't want Indians around here because they were bad for business and the land was needed for betterment," said Bruneau.

By 1886 most of the band members, due to living in desperate conditions because of disparities like the dying out of their main source of food, the buffalo, took Metis script in exchange for their lands.

With just 82 members left the government labelled them "stragglers" and moved them to the Enoch reserve just west of Edmonton.

"By 1888 they called a meeting to vote to get the land surrendered," said Bruneau who added that the three men that voted were not the majority needed to make the transaction legal. "The government thought they had majority consent, meanwhile we have records that say eight of them should've been consulted. It was illegal. The surrender is invalid,

so is everything else. It was complete, outright fraud what they did. They all wanted this land and they wanted our ancestors out of the way.”

Original band members ended up mostly dispersing to the surrounding First Nations in the Treaty 6 vicinity including Enoch, Alexander, the Maskwacis bands, Saddle Lake, Beaver Lake, Goodfish Lake, Kehewin, Frog Lake and Onion Lake.

The Papaschase lands were surveyed and sold and today are owned by the private, corporate and civil sector.

It wasn't until the 1970s that a few band members first took legal action alleging having suffered significant damages to their culture, language, and collective identity, including the loss of Indian status, band membership, economic opportunities and their lands.

The claim was filed on behalf of members that had amalgamated to Enoch Cree Nation in 1973, however it was rejected by the Indian Claims Commission citing non-sufficient claimants, and was not further pursued.



Indian encampment on Rossdale Flats at foot of McKay Avenue School in Edmonton circa early 1900s.
Courtesy: Papaschase band website

“I was wondering why it took so long for our ancestors to do anything about this stuff. You look at the past history; residential schools, then they weren't even allowed to leave the reserves, and back then it was illegal for them to even hire a lawyer. So you realize what our ancestors went through- it was out right war against us you might say,” said Bruneau.

Other attempts to seek legal retribution have so far, proved futile. However, Bruneau said the band continues to focusing on working with officials to reconcile. They maintain that a fiduciary obligation is owed to the descendants, because Canada reneged on the terms of the Treaty by breaking up the band and essentially stealing their land.

“We are owed land and compensation. Based on international law a contract has been breached. That is our legal position. We have a legal case and it can be processed through the Indian Claims Tribunal within 3 – 5 years,” said Bruneau.

“The city, the province and the feds- they’ve all been making money off those lands on the Southside over the years. With land sales, taxes and who knows what kind of resources have been taken out of there over the years. They owe us big time.”

However, the band is hoping a settlement agreement can be reached outside of the courts that could help rebuild the Papaschase community.

“All three levels of government have to acknowledge the moral and legal wrongs committed against the Papaschase people. It would be in the best interests of all levels of government to co-operate to settle this case. The Papaschase First Nation has been peaceful in its dealings with the governments on different matters, especially when it comes to burial grounds.”

In 2001 during a planned reconstructing of the Walterdale Bridge crossing the North Saskatchewan River near the Rossdale Flats area a Papaschase burial ground was unearthed. The city and province worked with band members to establish a memorial in this area and to redirect construction of the bridge.

Now, the band is regathering and looking to further build their nation. They currently have 1,000 members, however descendants continue to come forward and could end up being as many as 10,000.

Ezra Bergsma said when she first learned she was a descendant of Papaschase she felt proud, but also wanted to help rectify what happened.

“You want to fix it,” she said. “It was stolen. But the blood speaks louder, the families speak louder and I’m hopeful for a future.”



Grave markers at one of the Papaschase burial grounds near the Walterdale Bridge in Edmonton. Photo: Brandi Morin/APTN

Although, the band is not recognized under the Indian Act, area chiefs and the City of Edmonton do acknowledge the Papaschase people.

Made up of a functioning traditional chief and council band system, Chief Bruneau works on a voluntary basis, attends events and tribal meetings, however he is not yet allowed to participate in any Treaty organized voting.

Bruneau believes the success of the nation will be born through the establishment of sole economic initiatives, cultural establishments, coupled with joint ventures with Treaty 6 nations, the city and province that will in turn support housing, programs and services to nation members.

Edmonton's director of Aboriginal and Multicultural relations, Mike Chow said the city is supportive of the Papaschase.

"The City does acknowledge the Papaschase First Nation Society as one of the many important stakeholders in Edmonton's Aboriginal Communities. We continue to have ongoing fruitful discussions with them around issues of concern and importance to their membership."

Ultimately, Bruneau would like to see an official declaration from the city recognizing the Papaschase.

"But, also the lands that were illegally taken away. There needs to be compensation. And it needs to be declared that Edmonton is still on unceded, Indian land."

He added that he engaged in a conversation with Mayor Don Iveson just prior to the Truth and Reconciliation event held in Edmonton in March 2014. Mayor Iveson told him the city was "looking into getting them land." In the meantime, and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, Bruneau hopes these efforts will be followed through in the near future.

For more information on the Papaschase First Nation head to www.papaschase.ca

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/07/14/chief-says-edmonton-sits-stolen-indian-land-hopes-reconcile-past-wrongs/>

First Nations fighting pipeline replacement in Minnesota

Hamilton Spectator

By [Lauren Krugel](#)

Jul 13, 2015

CALGARY — Native and environmental groups are fighting a pair of proposed Enbridge pipelines that would cross lake-dotted country in northern Minnesota.

The Sandpiper and Line 3 Replacement projects would take the same route through much of the state — carrying North Dakota light oil and oilsands crude, respectively, to Superior, Wisc.

Opponents are using a variety of legal and bureaucratic means to stymie the pipelines, which are at different stages in the Minnesota regulatory process. Both are slated to start up in 2017.

For Ojibwe communities near the headwaters of the Mississippi River, the big concern is over wild rice beds, said Winona LaDuke, executive director of Honor the Earth, an environmental group based on the White Earth reservation.

Not only is wild rice a sacred crop to her people, but it's a major source of income, said LaDuke.

"It is the only thing our people can count on. You cannot count on the U.S. economy," she said.

"But you can count on your rice."

The \$2.6-billion Sandpiper pipeline is already about a year behind schedule because the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission last fall decided to review the need for the project and its route separately, rather than at the same time.

The commission granted Enbridge a certificate of need for Sandpiper in early June, a move that LaDuke said was tantamount to a "declaration of war." Groups are planning to challenge the certificate as soon as they're able. The route permitting process is now underway.

Meanwhile, the commission is just about to begin reviewing the Line 3 Replacement. The \$7.5-billion project, the biggest in Enbridge's history, involves decommissioning a nearly half-century old pipeline that runs between Hardisty, Alta., and Superior and replacing it with all new pipe.

Enbridge spokeswoman Lorraine Little said the lines don't cross reservation boundaries, so there's no formal negotiation process with bands. The Ojibwe do, however, gather, hunt and fish on ceded land.

Some, but not all, native groups have chosen to engage in consultations with the Calgary-based company, said Little.

"We certainly are sensitive to the concerns that have been raised in terms of the wild rice. And so that is part of the consultation process and the conversations that we'd like to have with the reservations to address those concerns."

Frank Bibeau, a lawyer for Honor the Earth, is drawing on his past career experience in the Minnesota government to "add confusion and delay" to the process.

"I think there's going to be a lot bigger fight than Enbridge understands right now," he said.

While opponents would prefer pipelines not be built in the first place, many are pragmatic.

Friends of the Headwaters, a local environmental group, pitched a route that juts diagonally across southwestern Minnesota, well away from most wild rice lakes.

"We understand that in the practical realities of today's world, that there's still a need to move petroleum product around the nation and around North America," said Richard Smith, with Friends of the Headwaters. "We think that Enbridge already has too large a footprint across Minnesota's northern water resources."

Enbridge pipelines have been crossing through the area for several decades. Smith is concerned that if Line 3 and Sandpiper go ahead, yet more pipelines will proliferate.

Little foresees Enbridge having to make "micro-adjustments" to Sandpiper to minimize impacts, but a drastic reroute would only mean a longer pipe that would affect more densely populated areas.

Joe Plumer, a lawyer who represents the White Earth reservation, said he recognizes that "they're probably going to put a pipeline through," but the company's proposed Sandpiper path "is the worst route that they ever could have chosen."

"The waters communicate above and below ground in those sensitive areas. You can't segregate a spill."

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5731870-first-nations-fighting-pipeline-replacement-in-minnesota/>

Regional Inuit org “disappointed” with Valcourt exemption of Mary River proposal

Oceans North says it's "a terrible precedent"

SARAH ROGERS, July 15, 2015 - 12:15 pm



Baffinland's port at Milne Inlet, built to ship iron ore from the nearby Mary River mine (PHOTO COURTESY OF BAFFINLAND)

Updated at 3:30 p.m.

The Qikiqtani Inuit Association says it is “disappointed” in a decision by the federal government that allows a proposal from Baffinland Iron Mines Corp. to bypass a regional land use plan.

In a letter dated July 13, [Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development minister Bernard Valcourt exempted Baffinland’s “Phase 2” proposal](#) for the expansion of iron ore production and shipping at Mary River from the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan.

Baffinland operates the Mary River iron mine, located about 150 kilometres from Pond Inlet.

At the same time, Valcourt has referred the proposal directly to the Nunavut Impact Review Board for screening and assessment.

But the QIA, backed by Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., [has argued that the best solution is an amendment to the land use plan.](#)

“QIA is disappointed that the minister has not allowed for an amendment process as the most appropriate way forward to ensure optimal participation in the [Baffinland] proposal with significant impact to the people of Pond Inlet,” the QIA said in a July 15 release.

Under the new scheme, filed in November 2014, Baffinland would increase iron ore production from an annual maximum of 4.2 million metric tons of iron ore to an annual maximum of 12 million metric tons.

And that would mean an expansion of their shipping season from ice-free months only — roughly June to October — to a 10-month period stretching between June and March each year, including the November to March period when ice forms on Eclipse Sound.

Eclipse Sound falls within the proposed boundary of the Lancaster Sound National Marine Conservation Area, which has yet to be created.

“It’s a terrible precedent to throw out land use planning when it’s not convenient,” said Chris Debicki of Oceans North, an environmental lobby group that has been [vocal in its opposition to Baffinland’s request for exemption.](#)

“We’re dubious that this project wouldn’t succeed by respecting the land use plan,” he added.

“And we’ve always believed that this mine can operate alongside a marine conservation area. But it’s not just about iron mining, but the potential increase in shipping through the region.”

Oceans North called on Nunavut MP and federal environment minister Leona Aglukkaq to weigh in, to assure residents of North Baffin region that they can enjoy both environmental protection and the benefits of economic development.

The Nunavut Planning Commission had little public reaction to Valcourt's exemption letter this week.

"From our perspective, once [we gave our decision](#), our role was done," said NPC chair Hunter Tootoo.

"We outlined the different options, and they chose to go that route."

In his July 13 letter, Valcourt defended his decision by arguing that exempting the project from the land use plan is in line with the intent of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

"The ability to exempt a project proposal from the requirement that it conform to the applicable land use plan is an important part of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement's integrated system of resource management," he wrote.

The minister is allowed to grant the exemption request as long as his department makes written reasons available to the Nunavut Planning Commission and to the public.

As another potential option, Baffinland could have asked the planning commission for an amendment to the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan.

But Valcourt said that process would be too unwieldy and might raise broader issues not related to Baffinland's specific proposal.

He also said the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan is likely to be soon replaced by the NPC's Nunavut-wide land use plan, which is entering its final stages.

Valcourt said the Hamlet of Pond Inlet does not support the idea of a land use plan amendment and wants Baffinland's proposal to go directly to the impact review board.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_org_disappointed_with_federal_exemption_of_mary_river_proposal/

Cree-Quebec forestry agreement is unacceptable, Innu say

[Kevin Dougherty, Special to Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: July 13, 2015 | Last Updated: July 13, 2015 10:41 PM EDT



Matthew Coon Come, grand chief of the Grand Council of the Crees, left, shakes hands with Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard after they signed an agreement, Monday, July 13, 2015 at the legislature in Quebec City. Jacques Boissinot / The Canadian Press

QUEBEC

A forestry agreement signed Monday halts a \$180-million Cree lawsuit against the Quebec government. But one group was missing from the negotiation table — the Innu First Nation.

While the agreement between the Quebec government and the Grand Council of the Crees calls for co-management of forestry cutting and protection of woodland caribou in northern Quebec, it may set off a new legal battle.

Gilbert Dominique, chief of the Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan Innu First Nation, said in a telephone interview from Mashteuiatsh Monday that the Cree-Quebec agreement is “unacceptable” because the land at the centre of the dispute is Innu, not Cree.

Dominique said 21 Innu families live in the 7,245-square-kilometre zone where the Crees say they have 14 traplines.

“It represents one-tenth of our territory,” Dominique said, adding that he has asked his legal advisers to look into the possibility of suing the province.

“There is a territorial impact,” he said. “We need to be consulted.”

Cree Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come told reporters in Quebec City, after the signing ceremony, that the Cree dispute with Quebec “was never about territorial claims,” but about forestry management.

Both the Crees and Innu have claims in the area covered by the 2002 Baril-Moses letter.

Negotiated by then-Quebec minister Gilles Baril and Cree grand chief Ted Moses, the letter gave the Crees a say over forestry management in the territory.

The Innu objected at the time the Baril-Moses lands are outside the Crees' James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement territory.

"I respect the decision of the Innu not to participate, but the door is open," Coon Come said.

Premier Philippe Couillard said participation by the Innu, who live in Couillard's Roberval riding, is of "capital importance."

Couillard welcomed Coon Come to the Quebec National Assembly as "a man of peace, a man of compromise, a man of vision."

"This agreement is undeniable proof that openness, dialogue and respect are complete values which enhance the nation-to-nation relationship that Quebec and the Cree nation have maintained for almost 50 years," Couillard said.

"May our friendship guide us along this path for many years to come."

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Geoffrey Kelley said the points of disagreement were with the Cree, not the Innu, but expressed hope the Innu would reach a framework agreement with Quebec similar to the 1975 James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement.

Dominique said he shares that goal and the disagreement over Cree claims would not derail the process leading to a Quebec-Innu agreement by the end of this year.

Former Quebec premier Lucien Bouchard acted as a mediator between the two sides and was paid \$500,000 to settle the dispute.

Premier Couillard said the payment was justified because Bouchard is a seasoned negotiator with roots in the Saguenay-Lac St-Jean area, where the contested forest areas are located.

A Quebec source said the payment to Bouchard should be put in the perspective of a \$180-million legal action the Crees took against the government, alleging it did not respect the 2002 Baril-Moses letter to protect Cree traplines in a 7,245-square-kilometre zone.

The Monday agreement:

- Halts a \$180-million Cree lawsuit against the Quebec government.
- Establishes more than 9,000 square kilometres in new protected areas where no forestry activity is allowed, to safeguard the woodland caribou.

- Creates a task force of the Crees, Quebec government and the Innu First Nation to work out forestry co-management practices by Dec. 1 in the 7,245-square-kilometre Baril-Moses forest.
- The Crees undertake to inform the Forestry Stewardship Council that the dispute, which led to the suspension of FSC certification for Resolute Forest Products Inc. paper sourced in the area, has been settled.

Coon Come had praise for Bouchard's "rare blend of tenacity and diplomacy" in reaching what Coon Come called "a new phase in a nation-to-nation partnership."

Under the new agreement, forestry operations in the area of the Cree traplines will respect limited, mosaic cutting, rather than the clear-cutting that began in 2010, triggering the lawsuit.

A new 9,134.81-square-kilometre protected zone, where no forestry activity is allowed, will be created near the Broadback River in undisputed Cree territory as a woodland caribou habitat.

The Bonn-based Forest Stewardship Council has suspended Resolute Forest Products Inc.'s FSC certification in a 32,000-square-kilometre area that includes the Baril-Moses area.

The FSC ruled Resolute was not respecting "indigenous peoples' rights" and that its cutting practices had an environmental impact on the endangered woodland caribou and old-growth forests.

Seth Kursman, spokesperson for Resolute Forest Products, said the absence of the Innu from the agreement Monday "could be problematic."

"I don't know how that will impact," Kursman said.

Forestry Minister Laurent Lessard said the dispute with the Crees began in 2010 when Quebec changed the forest-cutting rules in the Baril-Moses zone.

"Quebec is accepting its responsibility," the minister said. "That is where the differences began."

Resolute lost its certification when the Forestry Stewardship Council acted on the Cree complaint.

"It has been solved," Lessard said, expressing confidence the new agreement will allow Resolute to regain its FSC certification, considered essential by major paper buyers, as a guarantee of environmentally-sound practices.

Canopy, an environmentalist organization, speaking for “large global forest product customers,” welcomed creation of the new protected area for the caribou, but said the designated area should be expanded further.

Abel Bosum, the chief Cree negotiator, said the Crees are happy with the agreement because it reinstates the Baril-Moses agreement.

But Bosum admitted there is no unanimity among the Crees, with Waswanapi, a community near the new protected area, objecting it does not go far enough.

Bosum, a seasoned Cree negotiator, will now try to convince the Waswanapi Cree this is a good agreement.

“We would never get that through a bureaucratic process or the Plan Nord,” he said.

CORRECTION: An earlier version of this story described former Cree grand chief Ted Moses as “late”. He is still alive.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/cree-quebec-forestry-agreement-is-unacceptable-innu-say>

Cree and Quebec sign agreement to resolve dispute over forestry practices

Cree Nation filed a \$13M lawsuit in 2013 over clearcutting in traditional-use areas

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 13, 2015 4:35 PM CT Last Updated: Jul 13, 2015 4:35 PM CT



Matthew Coon Come, grand chief of the Grand Council of the Crees, left, shakes hands with Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard after they signed an agreement on forestry on Monday at the legislature in Quebec City. (Jacques Boissinot/The Canadian Press)

The Quebec government and James Bay Cree representatives have signed a partnership and co-operation agreement aimed at resolving a forestry dispute about territory that stretches from Lac St. Jean to James Bay.

The agreement between the Quebec government and the Grand Council of the Crees was signed in the National Assembly on Monday by Premier Philippe Couillard and Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come.

"Today, we set another significant milestone in the nation to nation relationship between Quebec and the Crees," said Couillard.

The Cree had accused the province and the forest industry, specifically Resolute Forest Products, of clearcutting on the land in question, in violation of the Baril-Moses agreement signed in 2002.

"This agreement secures the harmonization of forestry operations with Cree hunting, fishing and trapping activities in the Baril-Moses area." said Cree Nation Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come.



Members of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi travelled to Quebec City to protest the signing of the agreement. (submitted by Julia Gull)

The Baril-Moses agreement, signed at the same time as the Paix des Braves, was concluded by Minister Jacques Baril and then-Grand Chief of the Crees Ted Moses. It provided for the application of special rules for the forestry industry.

The Cree say the province violated the provisions of this agreement, allowing the forest industry to exploit traditional hunting and fishing grounds.

In 2013, the Cree Nation filed a \$13-million lawsuit against the provincial government and as recently as April 2015 sent a formal notice to Resolute Forest Products asking it to stop its operations in the area.

In January 2015, Quebec appointed former premier Lucien Bouchard to act as mediator in this matter.

Details of the agreement

The agreement provides for the harmonization of forestry activities by December 2015. It also sets out the creation of a joint working group with representation from Cree and Innu Nations and Quebec to reach a consensus regarding forest management standards in the area.

Additional protective measures will be implemented to promote the recovery of woodland caribou in Quebec.

Members of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi travelled to Quebec City to oppose the agreement. They say they are concerned how it will affect their efforts to create a protected area south of their community in the Broadback River watershed.

"We felt left out when it came to what we wanted within the agreement," said Waswanipi chief Marcel Happyjack.

"It's been over 30 years now that our hunting territory is affected by forestry. We see the effects on the land and the devastation. The animals are affected by it; the hunters see the deforestation due to forestry. This is what we don't want."

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come says the agreement signed today will not affect the Broadback River Watershed Conservation plan.

"There will not be any forestry development in that area, only where it was agreed on in the 2002 Paix des Braves," said Coon Come.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-and-quebec-sign-agreement-to-resolve-dispute-over-forestry-practices-1.3149770>

Special Topic: Residential Schools & '60s Scoop

Pope's apology in Bolivia a 'good sign' for residential school survivors: TRC commissioner

By [Dene Moore](#) / [Daily Brew](#) – Fri, 10 Jul, 2015



Pope Francis waves as he leaves the Bolivian prison of Palmasola in Santa Cruz, Bolivia July 10, 2015.

An historic apology from the Pope for the “grave sins” of the church during the colonization of the Americas is a sign the pontiff recognizes the sad history of his church when it comes to Indigenous peoples, says the head of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Justice Murray Sinclair says the apology delivered Thursday by Pope Francis in Bolivia gives hope that the Catholic leader may comply with his recommendation that the church apologize for its role in residential schools here in Canada.

“This can be taken perhaps as an indication that maybe he will be open to complying with, accepting our recommendation, that he come to Canada and apologize specifically to survivors of residential schools and their families...,” Sinclair tells Yahoo Canada News.

“Overall, I see it as a good sign.”

Pope Francis made the plea for forgiveness during a speech on social justice.

“I say this to you with regret: Many grave sins were committed against the native people of America in the name of God,” the pontiff said.

“I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offence of the church herself, but also for crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America.”

The pontiff said thousands and thousands of priests were opposed to the abuses and the violence that were employed.

“But we never apologized, so I now ask for forgiveness.”

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, says Pope Francis has shown real moral leadership with the apology. He credits a global movement of Indigenous peoples for bringing about the effort at reconciliation.

“I am seeking to meet with Pope Francis to personally urge him to make an apology here in Canada for the role of the Catholic Church in the suffering of Indian residential school survivors,” Bellegarde says in a statement.

He also wants the pontiff to renounce the papal directive for discovery used as a rationale for appropriating indigenous land and resources all over the world.

Bellegarde says he agrees with Pope Francis that colonialism still exists.

“[It] continues to foster inequality, poverty and an unhealthy relationship with Mother Earth,” he says. “First Nations in Canada are very much a part of the global social movement that aims to dismantle the inequalities and environmental abuses that make up the new colonialism.”

Reports on the Catholic leader’s comments were vague but Sinclair says they appear to be specific to events in Bolivia and Peru after the arrival of the Spanish.

Pope Francis’s apology does recognize that the Catholic Church failed to respect the cultural and spiritual beliefs of Indigenous peoples.

“But the experience of [Bolivian] people and the experience of residential school survivors are not identical,” he says. “I think residential school survivors are entitled to have their particular needs met through an appropriate apology.”

Beginning as early as the 1870s, more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were forcibly enrolled in Indian residential schools.

More than 70 per cent of the government-funded, church-run schools were operated by the Catholic Church. The last school closed in 1996.

In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI expressed “sorrow” to a delegation from the Assembly of First Nations for the abuse and “deplorable” conditions that First Nations students suffered in church-run residential schools.

Among the 94 recommendations Sinclair made in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report released last month was a call for an apology from the Pope for the “spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical and sexual abuse,” on Canadian soil, within a year.

“I think the specific experience of residential school survivors in Canada calls for a specific apology,” Sinclair says.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt did not respond to a request for an interview. Valcourt sent a letter bringing the commission recommendations to the attention of the Vatican but did not explicitly request an apology. Prime Minister Stephen

Harper reportedly didn't raise the issue of an apology either during a brief visit with the pontiff last month.

Direct Link: <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/pope-s-apology-in-bolivia-a--good-sign--for-residential-school-survivors--trc-commissioner-211237308.html>

How do you make amends for trying to erase a culture?

A survivor of the 60s Scoop on what's been lost and how to move forward.



Tasha Hubbard was adopted out through the Saskatchewan Adopt Indian Metis (AIM) pilot project, designed to place Indigenous children six and under into non-Indigenous homes.

By: Tasha Hubbard Published on Fri Jul 10 2015

On a hot July afternoon, a social worker handed me over to a young Saskatchewan farming couple.

I was three months old, and my adoptive mother tells me I wouldn't stop crying. She eventually realized I was too hot because my foster mother had dressed me in all the clothes that I possessed.

I was born Carrie Alaine Pinay in 1973 to a young Saulteaux/Metis/Cree mother who found herself alone and with limited support from family or from social services. She made a difficult decision, and decided to surrender me to a social worker she trusted. Her grandparents and parents and my Cree/Nakota father had been forced to attend residential school. After I met my birth parents as a teenager, I began to learn that my family network has been affected by a genocidal system engineered to dismantle nations by taking children away and inflicting pain, shame, and self-hatred.

I was adopted out through the Saskatchewan Adopt Indian Metis (AIM) pilot project, designed to place Indigenous children six and under into non-Indigenous homes. The

AIM project ran from 1967 to 1974, putting over 1,000 children in adoptive homes, some outside of the province and even outside of Canada.

It was thought by some of the program's administrators that if children were taken from their families at a young enough age, they would not have any "Indian or Metis" imprinting, and only their pigmentation would be different from their adoptive families. In my case, the social worker encouraged my young adoptive parents to raise me with the knowledge of being "an Indian." They did their best to do that, they raised me with love, and they supported me to search for my birth parents, whom I found when I turned 16. I know in many ways, my experience was the exception.

Thousands of children were "scooped" across Canada in the 1960s, 70s and even in the 80s, inflicting further damage to Indigenous family structures already reeling from the impact of the residential schools. Many times, parents were forced into surrendering their newborns, told that their children would suffer if allowed to stay. Other children were taken out of homes that were deemed insufficient by middle-class standards, but were often intact and loving. Siblings were more often than not sent to different homes, sometimes scattered across North America.

The so-called Scoop resulted in a generation of children, some 20,000, being raised outside of their families and communities, and without connection to their lands, ceremonies, and language. Many foster and adoptive parents were abusive and inflicted painful external and internal scars. As with the Indian Residential School system, the Scoop was part of a government effort to erase Indigenous peoples.

In early June, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued its report, telling the painful stories of survivors and their families, and we are beginning to see the first glimmers of grappling with these dark parts of Canada's history.

Alberta has pledged to join the North West Territories and Nunavut in including Residential School history as part of their school curriculum. While this is a promising step - and ought to be followed promptly by all provinces across the country - educational reforms must also include learning materials that expose the colonial roots that underlay the residential school system and the Scoop and continue to guide current policies involving Indigenous peoples.

Some universities, too, have begun to do their part. The University of Saskatchewan announced last week that it is joining several other western schools in supporting the education of youth who have emerged from the child welfare system. The U of S has stepped it up a notch, offering tuition for up to five years as well as comprehensive living expenses and other supports. Other universities need to offer similar options for Indigenous students, many of whom, despite perceptions, are not eligible for band funding.

There is clearly also a fledgling process of reflection now underway among some of Canada's governments. Alberta's new premier Rachel Notley apologized for the Alberta

government's inaction on residential schools. In Manitoba, Premier Greg Selinger apologized to those children and families affected by the 60s Scoop. Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall formally announced his intention to apologize in the near future.

But while apologies can be a good first step (if they are sincere), words can only do so much; they also must come with efforts to address the wrongs done with reparations. Federal, provincial and territorial leaders looking for somewhere to start ought to read, in full, the TRC's calls to action, some of which are updates of unimplemented recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples back in 1996.

To achieve justice, all of Canada needs to understand that the bluntly oppressive systems implemented from the beginning of Canada's existence as a state continue to be a lived legacy for both Indigenous peoples and Canadians. And justice requires the will to change that legacy.

Tasha Hubbard is a filmmaker and assistant professor of Indigenous literature and media at the University of Saskatchewan. She is a member of the Peepeekisis First Nation. An earlier version was published on the Broadbent Institute website.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/07/10/how-do-you-make-amends-for-trying-to-erase-a-culture.html>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

First lady addresses inaugural Native American youth summit

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and SUSAN MONTTOYA BRYAN, Associated Press

Updated 2:43 am, Sunday, July 12, 2015



Guscavedo Harrison, right, of the Navajo Nation who is from Chinle, Ariz., cheers as first lady Michelle Obama mentions the Navajo as being among the Nations present as she speaks to Native American youth at the first White House Tribal Youth Gathering, Thursday, July 9, 2015 in Washington. Obama told hundreds of Native American youths that they are all precious and sacred and that "each of you was put on this earth for a reason." Photo: Jacquelyn Martin, AP

WASHINGTON (AP) — [Michelle Obama](#) on Thursday told hundreds of Native American youths that they are all precious and sacred and that "each of you was put on this earth for a reason."

"Each of you has something that you're destined to do, whether that's raising a beautiful family, whether that's succeeding in a profession or leading your community into a better future," the first lady said in a sometimes emotional address at a first-time summit called by the White House. "You all have a role to play and we need you."

The event was part of Generation Indigenous, or Gen-I, a White House initiative that grew from President Barack Obama and Mrs. Obama's visit last year to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, which straddles the border between North Dakota and South Dakota. Meetings followed, Cabinet members held listening tours, tribal youth were chosen as ambassadors and a national network was formed.

The goal is to remove barriers that keep young people from reaching their potential.

Teenagers at the summit represented 230 tribes and 42 states. Discussions focused on economic opportunity, education and cultural and other issues.

From New Mexico's pueblos to Midwest reservations, nearly one-third of American Indian youths live in poverty, according to federal statistics. They have the highest suicide rates of any ethnicity in the U.S., as well as the lowest high school graduation rates.

Mrs. Obama recalled hearing "heart-wrenching stories" of substance abuse and other crises during last year's visit but said the storytellers were looking to the future, not giving up.

She urged the young people to "draw strength" from knowing that their customs, values and discoveries are "at the heart of the American story" and have shaped U.S. history for centuries.

"Everyone in this room has your back," she said. "Everyone who is speaking at this summit, all those Cabinet secretaries, all those powerful people who have come here for you, they have your back," Mrs. Obama said. "And you definitely have a president and first lady who have your back."

She also counseled the young people to connect with and "be inspired by each other," and to find out what issues others are working on and to take ideas home with them.

"Run for office. Local office, state office, even president of the United States," Mrs. Obama said. "I know you all have it in you."

Participants came up with ideas to address problems in their communities. Miguel Wambli, 16, of Rapid City, South Dakota, and a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, created a newspaper to feature writing by Native American students.

Seven suicides by teenagers in recent months have shaken the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and close to 1,000 suicide attempts were recorded on the reservation over nearly 10 years. Some students have projects aimed at raising awareness, while Wambli believes a newspaper would give teenagers an outlet.

"I want to try just to help them find their voice and be able to express themselves and be knowledgeable about what's going on in their community," he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.newstimes.com/news/politics/article/Native-American-youth-gather-in-DC-for-inaugural-6374747.php>

The Last Places In The U.S. That Still Ban Same-Sex Marriage

Jul 10, 2015 2:00 PM

[Meredith Clark](#)



Photo: Cultura/REX Shutterstock.

People across the U.S. and around the world celebrated when the Supreme Court ruled that couples have the right to marry regardless of gender, but marriage equality still eludes some people in this country. Members of at least 11 Native American nations face tribal bans against same-sex marriage, including the two largest tribes in America.

There isn't extensive data on which tribes in which states allow same-sex marriage — a spokesperson for the Human Rights Campaign said the group stopped tracking once the marriage-equality fight moved to the court system — but, based on what information is available, hundreds of thousands of people still don't have marriage equality on their home turf.

Both the Cherokee Nation and Navajo Nation, tribes that together have some [600,000 members](#), explicitly ban same-sex marriage, and despite activism by Native American LGBT advocates, marriage-equality supporters could have a long fight ahead of them.

The Cherokee tribal council approved a ban on same-sex marriage in 2004 after two women applied for a marriage license, and although that couple won the right to get married, no other couples did. The Navajo Nation passed a law, the [Diné Marriage Act](#), overriding a veto by the Navajo president to put it into place. The [Coalition for Navajo Equality](#) has been working to repeal it, and Navajo tribal leaders will meet later this month to discuss LGBT issues.

After the Supreme Court ruling, Alray Nelson, lead organizer for the Coalition, said in a statement, "Our Nation's long march towards equality can only move forward. The same must be said for the Navajo LGBT community. Today's victory will provide a foundation for future action by gay and lesbian Navajo couples who only want to be treated with fairness and respect by their Nation."

Couples could get marriage licenses outside of reservations, but as one Native American LGBT activist told the [Huffington Post](#), without the recognition of their tribes, couples lack access to the same benefits —housing, child custody, and property rights — that non-native same-sex partners just spent decades fighting for.

Even though most of the largest tribes don't specifically sanction same-sex marriage,

opposition is nowhere near uniform across the more than 500 recognized tribes in the U.S. According to [Marriage Equality USA](#), the Coquille Nation, which is based in Oregon, became the first tribe to pass a law allowing same-sex marriage, in 2008. This meant that members of the tribe were able to marry their same-sex partners six years before non-native couples in the rest of the state could. More than a [dozen tribes](#) currently allow same-sex marriage, and many have statutes that recognize the marriage laws of the states where the tribes are based.

Even if every tribe that currently bans same-sex marriage suddenly reversed course, LGBT advocates still have many crises to confront. Almost 20% of gay male Native American couples live in poverty, compared to less than 3% of white gay men, and 20% of Native American trans people live in extreme poverty. And in 2012, [more than half](#) of Native American students reported that they have dealt with physical violence because of their sexuality. Bringing marriage equality to everyone in America will be a further positive step, of course, but just like the rest of the country, it will be only one small component of improving life for LGBT Native Americans.

Direct Link: <http://www.refinery29.com/2015/07/90531/native-american-tribes-same-sex-marriage>

Confederate flag coming down, but what about symbols offensive to Native Americans?

By [Nick Logan](#) World Reporter/Global National Web Producer Global News, July 9, 2015 5:34 pm



Protestors gather outside of AT&T stadium voicing their stand against the Washington Redskins logo and name before an NFL football game between the Redskins and the Dallas Cowboys, Monday, Oct. 27, 2014. (File photo)

Brandon Wade/AP Photo

Friday will be a historic day as the Confederate flag, long considered a symbol of racism and oppression in the United States, will be taken down from outside the South Carolina state house.

Gov. Nikki Haley signed the legislation Thursday afternoon that will see the flag come down at 10 a.m. on Friday, after more than 50 years.

The flag's removal, which comes after the [murder of nine black congregants](#) of Charleston's Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal church on June 17, is being applauded. But it's far from the only step that needs to be taken to resolve racial inequality and hatred in the United States.

There are many more examples of racist symbols that remain in public view — in particular, those that are offensive to the Native American population.

Among those that have been the most galvanizing is the name and logo of the Washington Redskins football team. The U.S. capitol is a football town and the logos are everywhere, especially on a home game day.

Washington, D.C.-based tribal rights attorney Tara Houska said the Confederate flag may be different than a football team's name and mascot, on the surface, but she believes there's no difference when it comes to perpetuating racism.

"Football in the United States is like a religion," she said. "So for people to see that imagery and dress up in headdresses, for love of their team, at the same time they're simultaneously dehumanizing an entire race of people."

Houska, who spoke to Global News Thursday while attending the first-ever [Tribal Youth Gathering](#) hosted by the White House, is a founding member of [Not Your Mascots](#).

It's a non-profit organization "dedicated to [addressing the misappropriation of Indigenous identity and imagery](#) through the acceptance of mascots, stereotypes and racist behaviours." The group argues such representations have a "harmful effect" on indigenous children and communities.

The legal battle to get the football team to drop the name and mascot has been going on for decades.

But, there was a big victory on Wednesday when a federal court upheld a ruling [that invalidated the Washington Redskins' trademark registrations](#) because the name "[may disparage](#)" Native Americans. That doesn't spell an end for the team name, but the ruling is seen as a move in that direction. The team plans to appeal.

Houska thinks the removal of the Confederate flag will help people further understand how powerful some symbols can "affect the way people think and the way that people respond to one another."

“People just brush it off like ‘Oh, it doesn’t matter. It’s not important,’” she said.



If you were to argue that the name and logo of a football team isn’t as big a deal as a flag, take a look up the East Coast to Massachusetts, where the [state flag](#) is seen by some as depicting the historic oppression of Native Americans.

The flag depicts a Native American holding a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other. But above that is an arm bearing a sword; below is the motto, “By the sword we seek peace, but peace under liberty,” in Latin.

“It depicts oppression,” John Peters Jr., a member of the [Mashpee Wampanoag](#) tribe and executive director of the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs, [told the *Boston Globe*](#) on June 25. “To have the sword over our head . . . it signifies a policy that has affected all tribes.”

Then there’s the tiny community of Whitesboro, New York, about 160 kilometres west of state capital Albany, where the village seal shows a white settler wrestling (some say strangling) a Native American.

Mayor Patrick O’Connor, in an interview with the [Village Voice](#) on Tuesday, disagreed with the assessment that the seal is racist, describing it as depicting a “friendly wrestling match” — something that was apparently commonplace when the village was settled in the 1700s.

“I think you have to take all the facts into consideration. And if people take the time to do that and they reach out to us, or they do the research themselves, it’s actually a very accurate depiction of friendly wrestling matches that took place back in those days,” O’Connor said.

“I would argue that you will find supporters to change the seal and you will find supporters to keep the seal. It absolutely is not meant as a sign of disrespect, and, as you look at the seal in totality, with the story that the seal represents, I don’t believe that it’s offensive.”

If you've followed the debate over the removal of the Confederate flag, proponents have argued passionately that the banner is an important part of American history and a source of pride.

But Houska said if you need to make the effort to explain why such symbols aren't racist, you probably need to take a closer look at them.

"It's the same thing with Native American symbols like here in D.C. We're surrounded by the Washington football team everywhere, the caricature of the Native American everywhere. This is why people don't think we're real people," Houska said. "I hope that these conversations continue and people realize this is wrong."

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2102127/confederate-flag-coming-down-but-what-about-symbols-offensive-to-native-americans/>

Mary Fallin signs bill intended to protect Native American children

Posted: Thursday, July 9, 2015 8:45 pm

Gov. Mary Fallin recently conducted a ceremonial signing of House Bill 1834, which requires a law enforcement officer, when taking a child into protective custody, to determine whether the minor may be eligible for citizenship in a federally recognized American Indian tribe or nation; if so, the tribe or nation must be notified within three judicial days that a child with that ancestry is in the custody of the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA). Rep. Seneca Scott was the principal author of the measure; the Tulsa Democrat is standing just behind and to the left of the Governor. Scott has requested an interim legislative study to review data and trends from OJA on the Disproportionate Minority Contact Initiative; that data would be employed to make informed decisions on how to support minority youths in their education and within the community in a way that would enable them to become productive members of society.

Direct Link: http://www.tulsaworld.com/communities/skiatook/news/mary-fallin-signs-bill-intended-to-protect-native-american-children/article_c5011250-267e-11e5-9727-3b92bcdffe06.html

Court Revises Test on Determining Native American Status

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — Jul 8, 2015, 7:07 PM ET
By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

Attorneys in federal cases stemming from crimes on American Indian reservations have new guidance on what's needed to prove a defendant is Indian.

Federal authorities have jurisdiction over major crimes on tribal land when the victim, suspect or both are American Indian. A two-part test determines who is Indian.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals revised the first part of that test in an opinion Tuesday — no longer requiring that the degree of Indian blood be traced to a federally recognized tribe — and restored an [Arizona](#) man's 90-year sentence on assault and firearms charges.

The court said evidence at trial was enough to find Damien Zepeda is American Indian. Zepeda, an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian Community, disagreed.

"That's why it was so important to clarify that the proof in this case was sufficient," said Arthur Hellman, a University of Pittsburgh law professor who monitors the 9th Circuit. "This will lay down the rule for future prosecutors."

In 2013, a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit ruled prosecutors did not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Zepeda's bloodline of one-quarter Pima and one-quarter Tohono O'odham derived from an American Indian tribe recognized by the U.S. [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#). It reversed all but one of nine convictions and ordered a lower court to resentence him.

The panel also said federal recognition of a tribe is a matter for a jury to decide.

The court revised its opinion in September 2013 and said federal recognition is a question of law to be decided by a judge. The full 9th Circuit agreed Tuesday.

The new opinion reinstates Zepeda's convictions and sentence, and modifies what's known as the Bruce test for determining who is American Indian.

Under the revised test, a defendant still must be a member of or affiliated with a federally recognized tribe, and have a degree of Indian blood. But the defendant's blood quantum no longer must be traced to a federally recognized tribe.

The full 9th Circuit said the test was satisfied with Zepeda's tribal enrollment certificate, testimony by Zepeda's brother that their father was an Indian, and the Gila River Indian Community being a federally recognized tribe.

Zepeda's attorney, Michele Moretti, said Wednesday she would appeal to the U.S. [Supreme Court](#). Federal prosecutors declined to comment.

The 9th Circuit had placed several other cases dealing with Indian status on hold until it addressed the question in Zepeda's case.

The court was unanimous its ruling, but Judges Alex Kozinski and Sandra Ikuta disagreed with the reasoning. They said the Bruce test as refined by the majority violates equal protection rights because it turns on race, not political affiliation.

Kozinski said the U.S. Supreme Court has stressed that federal regulation of tribes does not equate to federal regulation of the Indian race.

"Damien Zepeda will go to prison for over 90 years because he has 'Indian blood,' while an identically situated tribe member with different racial characteristics would have had his indictment dismissed," Kozinski wrote.

Rob Williams, a University of Arizona law professor, said the cases raises interesting questions about identity, who asserts that identity and what makes someone Indian.

Standards vary among federal agencies that administer benefits to tribes and in the court system about what defines Indians, he said. Some tribes use blood quantum to determine membership, while others require ancestry to be traced to the original rolls.

"This is what is unique about federal Indian law as opposed to other countries," he said. "There is no uniform definition of who an Indian is."

Direct Link: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/court-revises-test-determining-native-american-status-32314342>

Native American groups to protest Cleveland Indians' 'Chief Wahoo' during game in Cincinnati

WCPO Staff



CINCINNATI – The American Indian Movement chapters of Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky are planning to protest the Cleveland Indians when they come to play the Reds next week.

The organization has scheduled a protest starting at 5 p.m. Saturday, July 18 at Great American Ball Park before the second game in the Indians-Reds series next week.

The group has been trying to get the team to get rid of their “Chief Wahoo” logo, which they say is offensive.

“Most sports teams are named after animals and they put us in that same category,” American Indian Movement of Ohio Philip Yenyo told the Associated Press earlier this year. “We’re human beings. We’re still a living culture and we still exist.”

The team has lessened their use of “Chief Wahoo,” but has so far resisted getting rid of the mascot altogether.

Direct Link: <http://www.wcpo.com/sports/baseball/native-american-groups-protesting-cleveland-indians-chief-wahoo-in-cincinnati>

Pope apologizes for church's crimes against indigenous people

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On the heels of calling for global action to combat climate change, Pope Francis on Thursday issued an apology for "sins" the Catholic church committed against the indigenous people in Latin America since the European conquest of the region.

In an address to a gathering of activists in Santa Cruz, Bolivia Pope Francis asked for forgiveness for the "many grave sins" committed against native peoples, including land-grabbing, mass enslavement, eradication of cultural practices and knowledge, and genocide.

"I say this to you with regret: Many grave sins were committed against the native peoples of America in the name of God," the pope said. "Here I wish to be quite clear, as was St. John Paul II: I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offenses of the church herself, but also for crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America."

The pope also built on his recent remarks on the need to protect the environment and railed against economic systems that degrade the planet.

"Time, my brothers and sisters, seems to be running out; we are not yet tearing one another apart, but we are tearing apart our common home," he said. "Our common home is being pillaged, laid waste and harmed with impunity. Cowardice in defending it is a grave sin."

"Let us say no to an economy of exclusion and inequality, where money rules... That economy kills. That economy excludes. That economy destroys Mother Earth," Pope Francis continued. "Today, the scientific community realizes what the poor have long told us: Harm, perhaps irreversible harm, is being done to the ecosystem."



Indigenous shaman in the Amazon.

The pope's speech was wildly popular, receiving a standing ovation from participants at the event, according to press reports.

The comments are significant because of the pope's popularity and influence among the world's billion-plus Catholics. Earlier this year he pleased some environmentalists when he said Catholics don't need to breed like "rabbits" and should practice "responsible" parenting, though he stood firm against use of artificial birth control.

Full remarks from Pope Francis

Good afternoon!

Several months ago, we met in Rome, and I remember that first meeting. In the meantime I have kept you in my thoughts and prayers. I am happy to see you again, here, as you discuss the best ways to overcome the grave situations of injustice experienced by the excluded throughout our world. Thank you, President Evo Morales, for your efforts to make this meeting possible.

During our first meeting in Rome, I sensed something very beautiful: fraternity, determination, commitment, a thirst for justice. Today, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, I sense it once again. I thank you for that. I also know, from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace headed by Cardinal Turkson, that many people in the Church feel very close to the popular movements. That makes me very happy! I am pleased to see the Church opening her doors to all of you, embracing you, accompanying you and establishing in each diocese, in every justice and peace

commission, a genuine, ongoing and serious cooperation with popular movements. I ask everyone, bishops, priests and laity, as well as the social organizations of the urban and rural peripheries, to deepen this encounter.

Today God has granted that we meet again. The Bible tells us that God hears the cry of his people, and I wish to join my voice to yours in calling for land, lodging and labor for all our brothers and sisters. I said it and I repeat it: these are sacred rights. It is important, it is well worth fighting for them. May the cry of the excluded be heard in Latin America and throughout the world.

1. Let us begin by acknowledging that change is needed. Here I would clarify, lest there be any misunderstanding, that I am speaking about problems common to all Latin Americans and, more generally, to humanity as a whole. They are global problems which today no one state can resolve on its own. With this clarification, I now propose that we ask the following questions:

Do we realize that something is wrong in a world where there are so many farmworkers without land, so many families without a home, so many laborers without rights, so many persons whose dignity is not respected?

Do we realize that something is wrong where so many senseless wars are being fought and acts of fratricidal violence are taking place on our very doorstep? Do we realize something is wrong when the soil, water, air and living creatures of our world are under constant threat?

So let's not be afraid to say it: we need change; we want change.

In your letters and in our meetings, you have mentioned the many forms of exclusion and injustice which you experience in the workplace, in neighborhoods and throughout the land. They are many and diverse, just as many and diverse are the ways in which you confront them. Yet there is an invisible thread joining every one of those forms of exclusion: can we recognize it? These are not isolated issues. I wonder whether we can see that these destructive realities are part of a system which has become global. Do we realize that that system has imposed the mentality of profit at any price, with no concern for social exclusion or the destruction of nature?

If such is the case, I would insist, let us not be afraid to say it: we want change, real change, structural change. This system is by now intolerable: farmworkers find it intolerable, laborers find it intolerable, communities find it intolerable, peoples find it intolerable ... The earth itself – our sister, Mother Earth, as Saint Francis would say – also finds it intolerable.

We want change in our lives, in our neighborhoods, in our everyday reality. We want a change which can affect the entire world, since global interdependence calls for global answers to local problems. The globalization of hope, a hope

which springs up from peoples and takes root among the poor, must replace the globalization of exclusion and indifference!

Today I wish to reflect with you on the change we want and need. You know that recently I wrote about the problems of climate change. But now I would like to speak of change in another sense. Positive change, a change which is good for us, a change – we can say – which is redemptive. Because we need it. I know that you are looking for change, and not just you alone: in my different meetings, in my different travels, I have sensed an expectation, a longing, a yearning for change, in people throughout the world. Even within that ever smaller minority which believes that the present system is beneficial, there is a widespread sense of dissatisfaction and even despondency. Many people are hoping for a change capable of releasing them from the bondage of individualism and the despondency it spawns.

Time, my brothers and sisters, seems to be running out; we are not yet tearing one another apart, but we are tearing apart our common home. Today, the scientific community realizes what the poor have long told us: harm, perhaps irreversible harm, is being done to the ecosystem. The earth, entire peoples and individual persons are being brutally punished. And behind all this pain, death and destruction there is the stench of what Basil of Caesarea called “the dung of the devil”. An unfettered pursuit of money rules. The service of the common good is left behind. Once capital becomes an idol and guides people’s decisions, once greed for money presides over the entire socioeconomic system, it ruins society, it condemns and enslaves men and women, it destroys human fraternity, it sets people against one another and, as we clearly see, it even puts at risk our common home.

I do not need to go on describing the evil effects of this subtle dictatorship: you are well aware of them. Nor is it enough to point to the structural causes of today’s social and environmental crisis. We are suffering from an excess of diagnosis, which at times leads us to multiply words and to revel in pessimism and negativity. Looking at the daily news we think that there is nothing to be done, except to take care of ourselves and the little circle of our family and friends.

What can I do, as collector of paper, old clothes or used metal, a recycler, about all these problems if I barely make enough money to put food on the table? What can I do as a craftsman, a street vendor, a trucker, a downtrodden worker, if I don’t even enjoy workers’ rights? What can I do, a farmwife, a native woman, a fisher who can hardly fight the domination of the big corporations? What can I do from my little home, my shanty, my hamlet, my settlement, when I daily meet with discrimination and marginalization? What can be done by those students, those young people, those activists, those missionaries who come to my neighborhood with their hearts full of hopes and dreams, but without any real solution for my problems? A lot! They can do a lot. You, the lowly, the exploited,

the poor and underprivileged, can do, and are doing, a lot. I would even say that the future of humanity is in great measure in your own hands, through your ability to organize and carry out creative alternatives, through your daily efforts to ensure the three “L’s” (labor, lodging, land) and through your proactive participation in the great processes of change on the national, regional and global levels. Don’t lose heart!

2. You are sowers of change. Here in Bolivia I have heard a phrase which I like: “process of change”. Change seen not as something which will one day result from any one political decision or change in social structure. We know from painful experience that changes of structure which are not accompanied by a sincere conversion of mind and heart sooner or later end up in bureaucratization, corruption and failure. That is why I like the image of a “process”, where the drive to sow, to water seeds which others will see sprout, replaces the ambition to occupy every available position of power and to see immediate results. Each of us is just one part of a complex and differentiated whole, interacting in time: peoples who struggle to find meaning, a destiny, and to live with dignity, to “live well”.

As members of popular movements, you carry out your work inspired by fraternal love, which you show in opposing social injustice. When we look into the eyes of the suffering, when we see the faces of the endangered campesino, the poor laborer, the downtrodden native, the homeless family, the persecuted migrant, the unemployed young person, the exploited child, the mother who lost her child in a shootout because the barrio was occupied by drugdealers, the father who lost his daughter to enslavement.... when we think of all those names and faces, our hearts break because of so much sorrow and pain. And we are deeply moved.... We are moved because “we have seen and heard” not a cold statistic but the pain of a suffering humanity, our own pain, our own flesh. This is something quite different than abstract theorizing or eloquent indignation. It moves us; it makes us attentive to others in an effort to move forward together. That emotion which turns into community action is not something which can be understood by reason alone: it has a surplus of meaning which only peoples understand, and it gives a special feel to genuine popular movements.

Each day you are caught up in the storms of people’s lives. You have told me about their causes, you have shared your own struggles with me, and I thank you for that. You, dear brothers and sisters, often work on little things, in local situations, amid forms of injustice which you do not simply accept but actively resist, standing up to an idolatrous system which excludes, debases and kills. I have seen you work tirelessly for the soil and crops of campesinos, for their lands and communities, for a more dignified local economy, for the urbanization of their homes and settlements; you have helped them build their own homes and develop neighborhood infrastructures. You have also promoted any number of community activities aimed at reaffirming so elementary and undeniably necessary a right as that of the three “L’s”: land, lodging and labor.

This rootedness in the barrio, the land, the office, the labor union, this ability to see yourselves in the faces of others, this daily proximity to their share of troubles and their little acts of heroism: this is what enables you to practice the commandment of love, not on the basis of ideas or concepts, but rather on the basis of genuine interpersonal encounter. We do not love concepts or ideas; we love people... Commitment, true commitment, is born of the love of men and women, of children and the elderly, of peoples and communities... of names and faces which fill our hearts. From those seeds of hope patiently sown in the forgotten fringes of our planet, from those seedlings of a tenderness which struggles to grow amid the shadows of exclusion, great trees will spring up, great groves of hope to give oxygen to our world.

So I am pleased to see that you are working at close hand to care for those seedlings, but at the same time, with a broader perspective, to protect the entire forest. Your work is carried out against a horizon which, while concentrating on your own specific area, also aims to resolve at their root the more general problems of poverty, inequality and exclusion.

I congratulate you on this. It is essential that, along with the defense of their legitimate rights, peoples and their social organizations be able to construct a humane alternative to a globalization which excludes. You are sowers of change. May God grant you the courage, joy, perseverance and passion to continue sowing. Be assured that sooner or later we will see its fruits. Of the leadership I ask this: be creative and never stop being rooted in local realities, since the father of lies is able to usurp noble words, to promote intellectual fads and to adopt ideological stances. But if you build on solid foundations, on real needs and on the lived experience of your brothers and sisters, of campesinos and natives, of excluded workers and marginalized families, you will surely be on the right path.

The Church cannot and must not remain aloof from this process in her proclamation of the Gospel. Many priests and pastoral workers carry out an enormous work of accompanying and promoting the excluded throughout the world, alongside cooperatives, favouring businesses, providing housing, working generously in the fields of health, sports and education. I am convinced that respectful cooperation with the popular movements can revitalize these efforts and strengthen processes of change.

Let us always have at heart the Virgin Mary, a humble girl from small people lost on the fringes of a great empire, a homeless mother who could turn a stable for beasts into a home for Jesus with just a few swaddling clothes and much tenderness. Mary is a sign of hope for peoples suffering the birth pangs of justice. I pray that Our Lady of Mount Carmel, patroness of Bolivia, will allow this meeting of ours to be a leaven of change.

3. Lastly, I would like us all to consider some important tasks for the present historical moment, since we desire a positive change for the benefit of all our

brothers and sisters. We know this. We desire change enriched by the collaboration of governments, popular movements and other social forces. This too we know. But it is not so easy to define the content of change – in other words, a social program which can embody this project of fraternity and justice which we are seeking. So don't expect a recipe from this Pope. Neither the Pope nor the Church have a monopoly on the interpretation of social reality or the proposal of solutions to contemporary issues. I dare say that no recipe exists. History is made by each generation as it follows in the footsteps of those preceding it, as it seeks its own path and respects the values which God has placed in the human heart.

I would like, all the same, to propose three great tasks which demand a decisive and shared contribution from popular movements:

3.1 The first task is to put the economy at the service of peoples. Human beings and nature must not be at the service of money. Let us say NO to an economy of exclusion and inequality, where money rules, rather than service. That economy kills. That economy excludes. That economy destroys Mother Earth.

The economy should not be a mechanism for accumulating goods, but rather the proper administration of our common home. This entails a commitment to care for that home and to the fitting distribution of its goods among all. It is not only about ensuring a supply of food or “decent sustenance”. Nor, although this is already a great step forward, is it to guarantee the three “L’s” of land, lodging and labor for which you are working. A truly communitarian economy, one might say an economy of Christian inspiration, must ensure peoples’ dignity and their “general, temporal welfare and prosperity”. This includes the three “L’s”, but also access to education, health care, new technologies, artistic and cultural manifestations, communications, sports and recreation. A just economy must create the conditions for everyone to be able to enjoy a childhood without want, to develop their talents when young, to work with full rights during their active years and to enjoy a dignified retirement as they grow older. It is an economy where human beings, in harmony with nature, structure the entire system of production and distribution in such a way that the abilities and needs of each individual find suitable expression in social life. You, and other peoples as well, sum up this desire in a simple and beautiful expression: “to live well”.

Such an economy is not only desirable and necessary, but also possible. It is no utopia or chimera. It is an extremely realistic prospect. We can achieve it. The available resources in our world, the fruit of the intergenerational labors of peoples and the gifts of creation, more than suffice for the integral development of “each man and the whole man”. The problem is of another kind. There exists a system with different aims. A system which, while irresponsibly accelerating the pace of production, while using industrial and agricultural methods which damage Mother Earth in the name of “productivity”, continues to deny many millions of our brothers and sisters their most elementary economic, social and cultural

rights. This system runs counter to the plan of Jesus.

Working for a just distribution of the fruits of the earth and human labor is not mere philanthropy. It is a moral obligation. For Christians, the responsibility is even greater: it is a commandment. It is about giving to the poor and to peoples what is theirs by right. The universal destination of goods is not a figure of speech found in the Church's social teaching. It is a reality prior to private property. Property, especially when it affects natural resources, must always serve the needs of peoples. And those needs are not restricted to consumption. It is not enough to let a few drops fall whenever the poor shake a cup which never runs over by itself. Welfare programs geared to certain emergencies can only be considered temporary responses. They will never be able to replace true inclusion, an inclusion which provides worthy, free, creative, participatory and solidary work.

Along this path, popular movements play an essential role, not only by making demands and lodging protests, but even more basically by being creative. You are social poets: creators of work, builders of housing, producers of food, above all for people left behind by the world market.

I have seen at first hand a variety of experiences where workers united in cooperatives and other forms of community organization were able to create work where there were only crumbs of an idolatrous economy. Recuperated businesses, local fairs and cooperatives of paper collectors are examples of that popular economy which is born of exclusion and which, slowly, patiently and resolutely adopts solidary forms which dignify it. How different this is than the situation which results when those left behind by the formal market are exploited like slaves!

Governments which make it their responsibility to put the economy at the service of peoples must promote the strengthening, improvement, coordination and expansion of these forms of popular economy and communitarian production. This entails bettering the processes of work, providing adequate infrastructures and guaranteeing workers their full rights in this alternative sector. When the state and social organizations join in working for the three "L's", the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity come into play; and these allow the common good to be achieved in a full and participatory democracy.

3.2. The second task is to unite our peoples on the path of peace and justice. The world's peoples want to be artisans of their own destiny. They want to advance peacefully towards justice. They do not want forms of tutelage or interference by which those with greater power subordinate those with less. They want their culture, their language, their social processes and their religious traditions to be respected. No actual or established power has the right to deprive peoples of the full exercise of their sovereignty. Whenever they do so, we see the rise of new forms of colonialism which seriously prejudice the possibility of peace and justice. For "peace is founded not only on respect for human rights but also on

respect for the rights of peoples, in particular the right to independence”.

The peoples of Latin America fought to gain their political independence and for almost two centuries their history has been dramatic and filled with contradictions, as they have striven to achieve full independence.

In recent years, after any number of misunderstandings, many Latin American countries have seen the growth of fraternity between their peoples. The governments of the region have pooled forces in order to ensure respect for the sovereignty of their own countries and the entire region, which our forebears so beautifully called the “greater country”. I ask you, my brothers and sisters of the popular movements, to foster and increase this unity. It is necessary to maintain unity in the face of every effort to divide, if the region is to grow in peace and justice.

Despite the progress made, there are factors which still threaten this equitable human development and restrict the sovereignty of the countries of the “greater country” and other areas of our planet. The new colonialism takes on different faces. At times it appears as the anonymous influence of mammon: corporations, loan agencies, certain “free trade” treaties, and the imposition of measures of “austerity” which always tighten the belt of workers and the poor. The bishops of Latin America denounce this with utter clarity in the Aparecida Document, stating that “financial institutions and transnational companies are becoming stronger to the point that local economies are subordinated, especially weakening the local states, which seem ever more powerless to carry out development projects in the service of their populations”. At other times, under the noble guise of battling corruption, the narcotics trade and terrorism – grave evils of our time which call for coordinated international action – we see states being saddled with measures which have little to do with the resolution of these problems and which not infrequently worsen matters.

Similarly, the monopolizing of the communications media, which would impose alienating examples of consumerism and a certain cultural uniformity, is another one of the forms taken by the new colonialism. It is ideological colonialism. As the African bishops have observed, poor countries are often treated like “parts of a machine, cogs on a gigantic wheel”.

It must be acknowledged that none of the grave problems of humanity can be resolved without interaction between states and peoples at the international level. Every significant action carried out in one part of the planet has universal, ecological, social and cultural repercussions. Even crime and violence have become globalized. Consequently, no government can act independently of a common responsibility. If we truly desire positive change, we have to humbly accept our interdependence. Interaction, however, is not the same as imposition; it is not the subordination of some to serve the interests of others. Colonialism, both old and new, which reduces poor countries to mere providers of raw material and

cheap labor, engenders violence, poverty, forced migrations and all the evils which go hand in hand with these, precisely because, by placing the periphery at the service of the center, it denies those countries the right to an integral development. That is inequality, and inequality generates a violence which no police, military, or intelligence resources can control.

Let us say NO to forms of colonialism old and new. Let us say YES to the encounter between peoples and cultures. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Here I wish to bring up an important issue. Some may rightly say, "When the Pope speaks of colonialism, he overlooks certain actions of the Church". I say this to you with regret: many grave sins were committed against the native peoples of America in the name of God. My predecessors acknowledged this, CELAM has said it, and I too wish to say it. Like Saint John Paul II, I ask that the Church "kneel before God and implore forgiveness for the past and present sins of her sons and daughters". I would also say, and here I wish to be quite clear, as was Saint John Paul II: I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offenses of the Church herself, but also for crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America.

I also ask everyone, believers and nonbelievers alike, to think of those many bishops, priests and laity who preached and continue to preach the Good News of Jesus with courage and meekness, respectfully and pacifically; who left behind them impressive works of human promotion and of love, often standing alongside the native peoples or accompanying their popular movements even to the point of martyrdom. The Church, her sons and daughters, are part of the identity of the peoples of Latin America. An identity which here, as in other countries, some powers are committed to erasing, at times because our faith is revolutionary, because our faith challenges the tyranny of mammon. Today we are dismayed to see how in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world many of our brothers and sisters are persecuted, tortured and killed for their faith in Jesus. This too needs to be denounced: in this third world war, waged peaceably, which we are now experiencing, a form of genocide is taking place, and it must end.

To our brothers and sisters in the Latin American indigenous movement, allow me to express my deep affection and appreciation of their efforts to bring peoples and cultures together in a form of coexistence which I would call polyhedric, where each group preserves its own identity by building together a plurality which does not threaten but rather reinforces unity. Your quest for an interculturalism, which combines the defense of the rights of the native peoples with respect for the territorial integrity of states, is for all of us a source of enrichment and encouragement.

3.3. The third task, perhaps the most important facing us today, is to defend Mother Earth. Our common home is being pillaged, laid waste and harmed with impunity. Cowardice in defending it is a grave sin. We see with growing

disappointment how one international summit after another takes place without any significant result. There exists a clear, definite and pressing ethical imperative to implement what has not yet been done. We cannot allow certain interests – interests which are global but not universal – to take over, to dominate states and international organizations, and to continue destroying creation. People and their movements are called to cry out, to mobilize and to demand – peacefully, but firmly – that appropriate and urgently-needed measures be taken. I ask you, in the name of God, to defend Mother Earth. I have duly addressed this issue in my Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*.

4. In conclusion, I would like to repeat: the future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organize. It is in their hands, which can guide with humility and conviction this process of change. I am with you. Let us together say from the heart: no family without lodging, no rural worker without land, no laborer without rights, no people without sovereignty, no individual without dignity, no child without childhood, no young person without a future, no elderly person without a venerable old age. Keep up your struggle and, please, take great care of Mother Earth. I pray for you and with you, and I ask God our Father to accompany you and to bless you, to fill you with his love and defend you on your way by granting you in abundance that strength which keeps us on our feet: that strength is hope, the hope which does not disappoint. Thank you and I ask you, please, to pray for me.

Read more: <http://news.mongabay.com/2015/0710-pope-indigenous-people.html#ixzz3fn8U12aF>

Tribes Blast 'Wannabe' Native American Professor

The Cherokee Nation is denouncing scholar-activist Andrea Smith for falsely claiming to be a member of the tribe. Beyond untrue, the ethnic fraud is a painful reminder of their past.

07.11.15 12:12 AM ET

“I have always been, and will always be Cherokee.”

This is University of California, Riverside professor Andrea Smith's [official response](#) to recent allegations that [she is not Cherokee](#), an identity that she has claimed throughout her decades-long career as a prominent figure in Native American scholarship and activism.

In a blog post on Thursday night, Smith maintained that she is Cherokee, that she has “consistently identified [herself] based on what [she] knew to be true,” and that “[t]here have been innumerable false statements made about [her] in the media.”

On June 30, research analyst and Cherokee genealogist David Cornsilk confirmed to [The Daily Beast](#) that he analyzed Smith’s genealogy at her request twice in the 1990s, finding no evidence of Cherokee ancestry either time. In response to Smith’s latest claim, Cornsilk again told The Daily Beast that she is not Cherokee and challenged her to share her ancestry publicly if she continues to label herself as Cherokee.

In her statement, Smith did not list any specific media statements that she feels are false nor did she offer evidence to refute the claims that she is not Cherokee. As was the case with The Daily Beast’s original report, Smith did not respond to request for comment.

Smith’s continued identification as Cherokee has been widely compared to the case of [Rachel Dolezal](#), a white woman who became the center of a media firestorm last month for posing as black while serving as an NAACP chapter president. Since The Daily Beast article on Smith was published, several media outlets including [Inside Higher Education](#), [Salon](#), and [Indian Country Today](#) have amplified the allegations that Smith, like Dolezal, has a lengthy history of “ethnic fraud.”

The coverage culminated Tuesday in an [open letter](#) from twelve female Native American scholars who wrote that “[Smith] has demonstrated no accountability, and undermines the integrity and vibrancy of Cherokee cultural and political survival.”

But Smith largely dodged this call for accountability in her first public response to the allegations, positioning herself instead as the victim of “social media attacks.”

“It is my hope that more Indigenous peoples will answer the call to work for social justice without fear of being subjected to violent identity-policing,” she wrote.

Smith will be able to continue her own work with the support of University of California, Riverside. Earlier this week, the school issued a statement to [The Daily Caller](#) saying that: “Professor Smith is a teacher and research [sic] of high merit who, on that basis, earned a tenured faculty position at UC Riverside.” They further noted that the school is prohibited, by law, from considering ethnicity as a factor in hiring decisions.

But whether or not the Cherokee community and the field of Native American studies will welcome Smith back is another matter.

Smith’s apparent ethnic fraud has sent shockwaves through academia that run far deeper than the case of Rachel Dolezal, despite drawing less public attention. As Scott Jaschik wrote on [Inside Higher Education](#), the widespread coverage of Dolezal’s fraud was disproportionate to her overall scholarly importance—she was “not a major player in African-American studies.” Smith, on the other hand, has enjoyed a prominent position in

Native American studies for decades. Her 2005 book *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* continues to be a staple on Native American studies syllabi.

Some of Smith's supporters have contributed statements to an anonymously curated blog entitled "[Against a Politics of Disposability](#)" but, aside from this, Native American scholars and activists have largely been critical of her claims.

On *Indian Country Today*, Steve Russell, a Cherokee writer and emeritus professor at Indiana University Bloomington, [asked](#), "How can you be an Indian without knowing which of your relatives is Indian? How can you be an Indian with no ties to an Indian community?"

According to [a keynote](#) Russell delivered in 2008, he received an unwanted phone call from Smith after writing about her claims of Cherokee ancestry online. In the address, Russell described a "bizarre" conversation in which Smith claimed that she "thought" that she was Cherokee but could not name a single Cherokee ancestor when asked.

"When I had personal contact with Andrea Smith, I came away with the same impression many people have had after personal contact with Rachel Dolezal: this is a deeply disturbed person," Russell wrote in his recent column.

For Russell and many other Native Americans, Smith is less directly analogous to Dolezal than she is to a long tradition of people who falsely claiming Native American descent or enrollment, people sometimes jokingly referred to as "pretendians" or members of the "Wannabe tribe." Author and activist Ward Churchill, for example, claimed to be an enrolled member of the United Keetowah Band of Cherokee Indians in the 2000s although he had only been awarded [an honorary associate membership](#) at the time.

Native Americans refer to this appropriation of their culture as "playing Indian," which is, ironically, a phenomenon that Smith herself [critiqued](#) in 1991.

Around the same time as Russell's "bizarre" interaction with Smith, Joanne Barker, a professor of American Indian Studies at San Francisco University who attended graduate school with Smith, had her own encounter with Smith's denial.

Last week, Barker wrote on her [blog](#) that she and "about a dozen Native feminist scholars" participated in a conference call with Smith back in 2008 to talk about her lack of Cherokee descent, which Smith had reportedly acknowledged to a colleague.

"When we all got on the conference call together, Smith refused to talk with the rest of us about it," Barker wrote. "She got on the call, bursted into tears, said, 'I can't do this,' and hung up."

Knowledge of Smith's fraud appears to have been widespread in academic circles but discussed more or less in private until now. As Kim TallBear, an associate professor of

Anthropology and Native American and Indigenous Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, noted in [a radio interview](#), “Within the field, we’ve known about it for years, many of us, and we’ve anguished over this because many of us know Andrea and her work has been valuable.”

Smith’s defenders have criticized the current focus on her identity as a painful replication of the logic behind blood quantum laws, which were used first by the colonial and then by the federal government in the U.S. to classify Native Americans based on their degree of ancestry by blood.

But the [Cherokee Nation](#) “does not require a specific blood quantum” for citizenship—it only requires “at least one direct Cherokee ancestor listed on the Dawes Final Rolls,” a late-19th and early 20th-century federal census of five Native American tribes.

Even by this low bar, David Cornsilk could not verify Smith’s supposed Cherokee ancestry. Cornsilk explained to The Daily Beast that his process involves crosschecking names on the rolls with members of the individual’s extended family including aunts, uncles, siblings, grandparents, and cousins.

“Andrea Smith isn’t just missing from the tribe, but [in] every generation back to the genesis of America, all of those relatives I mentioned are also missing,” he said.

The Cherokee Nation also independently told The Daily Beast that “Andrea Lee Smith” is not in their system.

In her public statement, Smith downplayed the fact that she is not enrolled in the Cherokee Nation: “My enrollment status does not impact my Cherokee identity or my continued commitment to organizing for justice for Native communities.”

But according to Patti Jo King, a Cherokee historian and Interim Chair of American Indian Studies at Bacone College who says she privately conversed with Smith about her claims of Cherokee identity in 2007, it is Smith’s deception—not her enrollment status and not her advocacy—that constitutes the central issue.

“She’s trying to switch the argument around here,” King told The Daily Beast in a phone interview. “We are not talking about her scholarship here. We are not talking about her commitment to Indian people.”

King also shared more details about the 2007 conversation in which she and Richard Allen, a Cherokee policy analyst, met with Smith to discuss her claims of Cherokee identity. During that conversation, Smith told King and Allen that her mother had told her that she was Cherokee. According to Cornsilk’s timetable, however, Smith would have already received confirmation that she was not Cherokee twice by that time.

King added that Smith was “very humble” during that meeting but now seems determined to continue claiming Cherokee identity in spite of the criticism she has received in the past week.

“This infringes on our rights of self-determination, self-identity, and sovereignty,” King said. “We are the best experts of our own culture and we have the sovereign right to decide who our members are, just like any nation.”

In a final strange development in Smith’s story, there are also emerging indications that her sister, Justine, may have also made false claims of Cherokee ancestry. Justine Smith has a lower public profile than her sister but has still established a career as a [pastor and theologian](#) in Native American communities.

In his [Indian Country Today](#) column, Steve Russell relayed a story about Justine Smith submitting “a Cherokee Registry card with her name and somebody else’s number on it to a prospective academic employer.”

The [anonymous Tumblr](#) that has been leaking information about Andrea Smith for the past several weeks includes a similar allegation—attributed to King’s colleague Richard Allen, who could not be reached for comment because he is on medical leave—about Justine Smith’s 2010 hiring at the Saint Paul School of Theology in Oklahoma, namely that she was hired using fraudulent Cherokee identification and then quickly left the position when confronted.

A [2010 hiring announcement](#) from Saint Paul School of Theology does indeed list Justine Smith as “a member of the Cherokee Nation” and refers to her “the first full-time Native American woman to serve in any full-time faculty position in theological education in North America.”

Dean Elaine Robinson of the Saint Paul School of Theology was not willing to address the specifics of Justine Smith’s identity but she did note in a statement to The Daily Beast that Smith began work on July 1, 2010, that the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma made “accusations related to [her] Native identity,” and that Smith “has not been associated with Saint Paul School of Theology since October 2010, just three months after her hire date.

“I’ve had no contact with her since then,” Robinson said.

Despite the fact that the Cherokee Nation seems to have disputed Smith’s identity in 2010, she is still listed as Cherokee on [the website](#) for the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies and a [2013 interview](#) referred to her as “Native American.”

She is currently a pastor at Norman First American United Methodist Church in Oklahoma and, on July 2—days after the allegations about her sister had already come to light—the church’s Facebook page shared [a photo](#) of Justine Smith “discuss[ing] history

of the Cherokee, including a large display of Cherokee baskets, carvings [sic], children's books, New Testament [sic] in Cherokee, and Cherokee 'Tear' dresses."

Justine Smith did not respond to questions about her position at the Saint Paul School of Theology and her identification as Cherokee. The Norman First American United Methodist Church also did not reply to questions about whether or not Smith identifies as a Native American pastor.

Direct Link: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/07/11/tribes-blast-wannabe-native-american-professor.html>

President Obama To Visit Oklahoma Federal Prison, Native American Tribe This Week

By [Brian Hardzinski](#) • Jul 10, 2015



President Obama speaking in Cushing, Oklahoma in March 2012.

President Obama plans to visit Oklahoma to discuss expanding economic opportunities in Indian Country, and make the first visit to a federal prison by a sitting chief executive.

White House spokesman Keith Maley said in an email the president will arrive in Oklahoma Wednesday, July 15 and travel to Durant, where he'll visit the Choctaw Nation. He'll stay overnight before traveling to the El Reno Correctional Institution.

The medium-security facility for male offenders houses about 1,300 inmates and once housed Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh.

At the prison, the president will meet with law enforcement and inmates and conduct an interview for a Vice documentary airing later this year about the criminal justice system.

Earlier this week the White House hosted several Oklahoma tribal representatives as part of a gathering of Native American youth, [according to The Oklahoman's Washington bureau chief Chris Casteel](#):

The president's trip to Indian Country reflects the attention his administration has given to tribes, which has made him popular among tribal leaders and earned him praise even from some Republicans like Rep. Tom Cole, R-Moore, who is a Chickasaw.

The White House holds an annual tribal conference at which the president speaks and cabinet officials meet with tribal leaders.

...

The president's visit to Durant will come just days after the administration settled a long-running lawsuit with the Choctaws and Chickasaws over alleged mismanagement of tribal assets, including timber land, held in trust by the federal government.

Details of the settlement have not been released.

Earlier this week, the Choctaw Nation broke ground in Durant on a regional health clinic that will be a joint venture between the tribe and the Indian Health Service.

Next week's trip marks the third time Obama has visited the Sooner State since taking office in 2009. He [delivered a speech announcing fast-track approval of the southern leg of the Keystone XL pipeline](#) at the oil storage tank hub in Cushing in 2012, and also visited Moore in 2013 following the May 19 and 20 tornadoes that took more than two dozen lives.

Saying the president isn't popular in Oklahoma would be an understatement. The president did not visit the state during his 2008 presidential campaign during a close race against 2016 Democratic front runner (and his eventual pick for Secretary of State) Hillary Clinton.

In 2008, Oklahoma saw the widest popular vote gap between Obama and Republican presidential nominee John McCain during the general election - just 34 percent for Obama compared to 66 percent for McCain.

University of Oklahoma political scientist and pollster Keith Gaddie [told The Washington Post in 2012](#) the president started his first term with a respectable approval rating in Oklahoma, but that rapidly collapsed:

“I’d like to say that its a function of the Keystone Pipeline decision or three-dollar gas, but I think it is more profoundly cultural,” Gaddie said. “These voters come from the old agrarian populist tradition in Oklahoma, rather than from Great Society liberalism. They dislike the president, dislike his liberalism, and they were afforded an opportunity to vote directly against him, so they took it.

“It is not a rebellion of most Democrats, but it is representative (or symptomatic) of what has been going on here since 2008.”

Information from the Associated Press was used in this report.

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Direct Link: <http://kgou.org/post/president-obama-visit-oklahoma-federal-prison-native-american-tribe-week>

Pope balances apology to indigenous for colonial abuse with praise for Jesuit missions

Published July 11, 2015

[Associated Press](#)



Franciscan monks pray during Pope Francis' Mass at the Shrine of the Virgin of Caacupe, in Caacupe, Paraguay, Saturday, July 11, 2015. The shrine is the country's most important pilgrimage site and a place that is very close to Francis' heart. (AP Photo/Jorge Saenz) (The Associated Press)

ASUNCION, Paraguay – Pope Francis is balancing out his apology for the crimes the Catholic Church committed against indigenous during the colonial-era conquest of the Americas with high praise for the Jesuit missions in Paraguay that brought Christianity and European-style education and economic organization to the natives.

The Argentine Jesuit praised the Jesuit "reductions," as the missions were known in Paraguay, as an almost utopian social and economic experiment — one that was immortalized in the 1986 film "The Mission." He said Saturday they were "one of the most important experiences of evangelization and social organization in history."

"There the Gospel was the soul and the life of communities which did not know hunger, unemployment, illiteracy or oppression," he said. "This historical experience shows us that, today too, a more humane society is possible."

The Jesuits founded the Paraguay missions in the 17th and 18th century as an alternative to the colonial encomienda system, in which Spain's king granted land in conquered territories to those who settled there, who then had indigenous peoples live there and work the land. The missions were relatively autonomous from Spanish rulers — intentionally so to protect the Guarani from the abuses of the encomienda leaders who wanted them as a source of labor.

The missions were well defended — the Jesuits created a Guarani militia — and were economically successful, with the Jesuits teaching the Guarani to have both individual and communal property to provide for families who couldn't provide for themselves, according to "The Jesuits in Latin America: 1549-2000," a history of the order on the continent written by the Jesuit historian, the Rev. Jeffrey Klaiber. Unlike missions elsewhere in the Americas, where indigenous rebellions against the missionaries were rife, there were no such rebellions by the Guarani in Paraguay, Klaiber wrote.

Francis cited the Paraguayan mission experience as an example of the type of economic and social system that looks out for the common good rather than individual interests, and creates an inclusive society where the poor aren't left on the margins. It's the type of a financial system that he has been calling for repeatedly to correct the "perverse" global financial system today, and especially on his three-nation South American pilgrimage.

"Where there is love of people and a willingness to serve them, it is possible to create the conditions necessary for everyone to have access to basic goods, so that no one goes without," he said.

Francis' comments came just days after he issued a sweeping apology for the sins and "crimes" of the Catholic Church against the continent's indigenous peoples — an apology that received thunderous applause from a gathering of indigenous and civil groups in neighboring Bolivia. By contrast, Francis' comments Saturday about the Jesuit missions were met with silence by a similar gathering of indigenous and non-governmental groups in Paraguay.

Ricardo Pavetti, a member of the Academy of Paraguayan History, said the Jesuits were eventually expelled by the Spanish from Paraguay in the mid-18th century precisely because the missions were so economically and militarily successful. He said the missions were hardly democratic and were at times "despotic," but that the Jesuit missionaries were highly capable men who taught the natives trades and how to read and write.

"With distance the Jesuits created something like, to use a metaphor, a communist Christian republic," he told The Associated Press. "It seems to be a contradiction, but it's the best illustration to understand what happened a long time ago."

Direct Link: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/07/11/pope-balances-apology-to-indigenous-for-colonial-abuse-with-praise-for-jesuit/>

Seattle School Named After Robert Eagle Staff, Fourth to Have Indigenous Name

[Richard Walker](#)

7/12/15

Seattle's newest middle school will be named for the late Robert Eagle Staff, Lakota, principal of American Indian Heritage High School from 1989-1996.

The Seattle School Board voted June 17 in favor of the naming. "The extensive community engagement naming process has resulted in majority support to honor the accomplishments and legacy of a great educator, Robert Eagle Staff," said Jon Halfaker, executive director of schools for the Seattle School District's Northwest region.

"It's huge" for the Native community, said the late principal's son, Louis Eaglestaff, who spells his name as one word as his father did. Eaglestaff said the district chose to spell Eagle Staff as two words, out of respect for the wishes of family members in South Dakota who spell it that way.

No matter. "Even though he did so much for students, the school name is validation that [his legacy] is always going to be there," said Eaglestaff, a kindergarten teacher in nearby Bellevue. "I don't need validation, because what he did was enough for us. But it's something to be proud of."

Robert Eagle Staff Middle School will be built at the site of the former Wilson-Pacific School, which housed American Indian Heritage School. The new middle school will have room for 850 students, as well as 150 from the American Indian Heritage School program. It is scheduled to be completed in 2017.



Top: an architect's rendering of the new Cascadia Elementary School. Bottom: the new Robert Eagle Staff Middle School. (Mahlum Architects)

The former Wilson-Pacific School site is important to Seattle's Native community. It is the site of a spring, called Licton (*Liq'tid*), which is historically and culturally significant to the Duwamish people. American Indian Heritage hosted powwows and cultural programs for young people, and the buildings featured Native-themed murals by artist Andrew Morrison, Apache/Haida. The walls with the murals are being saved and will be incorporated into the new school buildings.

Getting the school named for Eagle Staff was part of a long effort by the Native community—an effort that continues now in trying to rebuild the American Indian Heritage program.

The school board's vote "is the culmination of a two-year campaign which included active lobbying, a documentary, online petitions, many phone calls, tons of letters written in support, and community meetings," wrote Sarah Sense-Wilson, Lakota, chairwoman of the Urban Native Education Alliance.

"The next fight is having a Native-focused high school in [Eagle Staff] school."

During Eagle Staff's leadership, American Indian Heritage High School had a 100 percent graduation rate with all graduates going on to college. Eagle Staff, a University of North Dakota Hall of Fame basketball player, passed away unexpectedly at age 43, and enrollment in the school he led started to decline amid changes in funding and program support.

The school buildings fell into disrepair as the district diverted funding to other priorities. By 2012, plans were developed to build a new school to accommodate projected enrollment growth and alleviate overcrowding in three other middle schools. In 2013, voters approved a capital levy to fund construction of several new schools and to modernize others. In 2014, the American Indian Heritage School program was merged

with a program from another school, also closed for new construction, renamed Licton Springs, and moved temporarily to another site.

“Licton Springs is going to take another 3-5 years of development to reach a level of Native focus we think is authentic,” Sense-Wilson wrote in an email. “Still no Native staff, no language, no cultural programming at Licton. A majority of the kids are non-Native.”

Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Larry Nyland recommended the school board name the school in honor of Eagle Staff based on input at community meetings and comments from 190 members of the public. Supporters at the final community meeting on May 4 included members of Eagle Staff’s family. Only three people at the meeting spoke in favor of naming the school after another nominee, Dr. Caspar Sharples, an early 20th century Seattle physician and co-founder of Children’s Hospital. Other names considered included Billy Frank Jr., Nisqually (1931-2014), treaty rights activist and environmental leader.

A 660-student elementary school will be built adjacent to Robert Eagle Staff Middle School. The school board voted to name it Cascadia, after the geographic bioregion that includes Washington, Oregon and British Columbia. Other names nominated included author-poet-playwright Sherman Alexie, Spokane; author-poet-actor Maya Angelou; Josephine Corliss Preston (1873-1958), the first woman elected to state office in Washington; and Dr. Caspar Sharples.

Several indigenous nations have ties to Seattle, including the Duwamish Tribe, the Muckleshoot Tribe, and the Suquamish Tribe. Of 92 public schools in Seattle, only four have indigenous names: Leschi, the mid-1800s Nisqually leader; Sacajawea, the Lemhi Shoshone interpreter and guide for the Lewis and Clark Expedition; Chief Sealth (an anglicization of Si’ahl), the mid-1800s leader of the Duwamish and Suquamish; and Eagle Staff.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/12/seattle-school-named-after-robert-eagle-staff-fourth-have-indigenous-name-161015>

Native American business office finds new home

July 11, 2015 11:45 pm • By [Nick Smith](#)



Taysean Hosie holds popular clothing items for sale in Chiefin' Clothing, a Bismarck business owned by his parents, Leonard and Kacey Hosie.

Spinoff program helps local business

NICK SMITH

Bismarck Tribune

A spinoff of the state's Native American business office helped at least one small business in Bismarck to expand as it was getting off the ground.

Kacie Hosie, who owns Chiefin' Clothing in Bismarck with her husband, Leonard Hosie, said the store opened about a year ago after building an online presence for a few years before that.

Hosie said her husband originally began the business by making clothing designs for men, women and children and expanding it as demand grew and the website was established. Eventually a storefront was needed.

"Our house was just getting cluttered with clothes," she said.

The two moved into one of the suites at 1906 E. Broadway Ave. but are in the process of moving to a new, larger location.

Leonard and Kacie Hosie worked through the North Dakota Indian Business Alliance last year to receive a \$1,000 "business builder" grant from the organization. The grants are meant for marketing and sales purposes: The Hosies used it to complete signage at their store and enhance their website, chiefinclothing.com.

"It helped a lot. We're doing really good," Hosie said.

The company is one of nine in the state that received grants in the past couple of years.

Indian Affairs Commissioner Scott Davis, who helped found the organization, said it was a spinoff of the state-run American Indian Business Development Office. He said the Indian Business Alliance spinoff is now a nonprofit organization.

“It gives more resources to Native American privately owned businesses on and off the reservation,” Davis said.

Hosie said the grant dollars went to good use and recommended it, or any program providing assistance to Native American business owners, to her peers.

“I tell everyone about the Indian Business Alliance. With any business, it would be helpful to set up, to expand,” Hosie said.

The head of the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission said he hopes a move in taking the lead role of a state Native American business office will spur an increase in Native American businesses on and off the state’s reservations.

“I’ve always been an advocate for private-owned Native American businesses on and off the reservations. The bottom line is providing access to employment,” Indian Affairs Commission executive director Scott Davis said.

The American Indian Business Development Office was originally created in 2006 in the Department of Commerce. House Bill 1005, the Indian Affairs Commission budget, transfers the lead role in the oversight of the business office to the commission. The commerce department will assist by continuing to provide the business expertise it did previously.

The purpose of the office is to provide a resource for North Dakota companies owned and operated by Native Americans to get assistance in developing businesses. It also is meant to provide access to programs and services for Native American business owners.

HB1005 also allows the option of contracting the services of the office to a third party, which is expected to take place in the coming months.

Davis said during his six years with the agency he’s wanted to expand its focus to include business development. His office primarily deals with areas including education, health care and unemployment; he called an increase in focus on business development another piece of solving the puzzle of helping lift more Native Americans out of poverty.

Davis said his agency has numerous connections with tribal colleges, local government, the tribal business community and others. Having it under his agency’s jurisdiction, which has those ties and Native American leadership, might entice more business owners or those planning businesses to come forward.

“It does create more added value and added trust to those types of discussions,” Davis said.

The office budget is for \$100,000 for the 2015-17 biennium.

Davis said there are an estimated 1,300 Native American-owned and operated businesses in the state. He was unsure how many have benefited from the Native American Business Development Office.

North Dakota Commerce Commissioner Al Anderson said the move to the Indian Affairs office makes sense.

“He’s got some very good ties with the leadership of each of the tribes. We’d find a bit more success than in the past,” Anderson said.

In recent months, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Reservation worked to develop a uniform commercial code. The tribe has yet to finalize an agreement with the North Dakota Secretary of State’s Office for registering businesses. An official with the secretary of state’s Office said the tribe likely will begin having business registrations issued through the office after its new business registration software application comes online in early November.

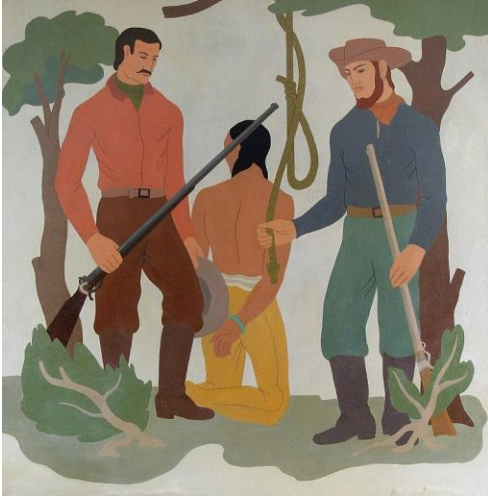
“It makes it easier to help increase business development on the reservation,” Anderson said.

If it proves successful, it could spur other tribes to develop codes and follow the example of Standing Rock, Anderson said.

Direct Link: http://bismarcktribune.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/native-american-business-office-finds-new-home/article_ccf490d7-0e80-5d88-b50e-f4bbb0b379bc.html

Group Fights To Keep Mural Of Native American Lynching

by [Carimah Townes](#) Jul 13, 2015 12:38pm



Last Friday, the debate about the influence and presence of the Confederate flag resulted in the emblem's [removal](#) from the South Carolina State House grounds. As staunch supporters of the flag argue it is a symbol of [Southern heritage](#) that should be preserved, another battle over "traditional" symbols is brewing. In Boise, Idaho, a preservation group is [fighting](#) to keep two murals depicting the lynching of a Native American in a university and government affairs building.

The [murals in question](#) currently hang in a former courthouse that will soon house some of the Idaho Supreme Court's operations, the University of Idaho's College of Law, and the state's law library. A few years ago, the building was used for state legislature meetings, and commemorative plaques were placed near the murals. The state's Native tribes consented to keeping the artwork up as long as the plaques were installed, but a debate about the murals' presence has sprung up once again. And in response to the latest dispute, Preservation Idaho submitted a letter to the University of Idaho asking that the art remain on display — using Idaho's history to justify the murals' presence.

"Idahoans have not destroyed the sites of the Bear River Massacre, the Minidoka Internment Camp, or Massacre Rocks State Park," wrote Preservation Idaho president Paula Benson. "We deplore what happened at the sites but we acknowledge them so that we may reflect and learn from past mistakes." The art was originally hung in the 1930s.

"Certainly we can't destroy those murals. There's value in those murals, and that was established," Bob Geddes, the director of the Department of Administration, which owns the building, told the Spokesman-Review. "We've given them the go-ahead if they want to drape those with something, but they should not destroy them or take away the plaques." In light of the controversy, banners will cover the murals for now.

But the preservation argument is one that keeps popping up.

With the push to "take down the flag" gaining steam, Native Americans are trying to use that momentum to [fight the Redskins team name](#). Widely perceived as a racist slur among Native Americans, the name is a profitable one for NFL stakeholders who are reluctant to

change it. However, opponents of the change, including the team's owner, Daniel Snyder, have [defended the name](#) on the grounds that it honors the franchise's second coach — who may or may not have actually been of Sioux heritage and attended the Native American boarding school where the team originated. But those who are trying to keep the team name alive were dealt a huge blow last week, when a [federal court canceled the franchise's trademarks](#).

[A similar battle](#), inspired by the Confederate flag debate, has been reignited in Whitesboro, New York. The town's seal currently shows the founder, Hugh White, strangling a Native American and pushing him to the ground. The logo is depicted on official documents, highways, and vehicles, but a social media campaign was recently waged to get the seal removed. The town previously agreed to alter the image by putting White's hands on the Native American's shoulders, but it never fulfilled its promise to change the seal.

“Some have reached out directly to me through my village email. And if they looked at the seal and went with an opinion based solely on what they're looking at, I could understand why people would have concern about it. But, [as with] everything else, I think you have to take all the facts into consideration,” Mayor Patrick O'Connor maintains. “And if people take the time to do that and they reach out to us, or they do the research themselves, it's actually a very accurate depiction of friendly wrestling matches that took place back in those days.”

Direct Link: <http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2015/07/13/3679660/preservation-group-fights-keep-mural-native-american-lynching/>

Native American man to lead Rapid City's new cultural effort

Associated Press 1:59 p.m. CDT July 12, 2015

RAPID CITY — A Native American man who in the past five years has overcome jail and problems with alcohol and his mental health will lead the Rapid City Police Department's new effort to increase cultural understanding between law enforcement and the community.

Vaughn Vargas was selected by Rapid City Police Chief Karl Jegeris on Friday to be the department's first cultural advisory coordinator. His appointment comes at a time when Native Americans make up 12 percent of Rapid City's population but account for 59 percent of people arrested.

“Mr. Vargas is connected. He has street smarts that I myself don't have, and the members of the Rapid City Police Department don't have,” Jegeris said. He added that Vargas also

“has a deeper understanding of what leads young people in our community down the path of being on the receiving end of criminal justice services.”

Vargas is a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/1HVGnA0>) reported. He has overcome his troubled past to become a community activist and a top student at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

The advisory committee’s goal is to represent all races and cultures, with an emphasis on representing Native Americans in the community.

The city’s long-standing racial divide was put on the spotlight following a January incident in which a white Philip man allegedly harassed a Native American student group at a hockey game in a city-owned arena. The man, Trace O’Connell, is scheduled to stand trial later this month on a disorderly conduct charge.

“This is generational,” Vargas, 29, said. “This issue has been going on a long time. But now’s an opportunity. Leaving everything else aside, this opportunity’s here, and we’re taking advantage of it.”

Vargas’ \$19.24 hourly wage will be paid from the Police Department’s existing budget. Vargas has three semesters left before graduating from the School of Mines and will work part time around his college schedule.

Vargas was incarcerated for a 2010 fourth-offense driving under the influence conviction. He said he had been contemplating ending his life before his arrest, and he credits his turnaround to the arrest, work-release program while in jail and subsequent help from a number of people.

“While I was walking to work, I was seeing people go to school and seeing people be active and enjoying their lives, and I wanted that,” Vargas said. “I wanted it severely.”

Direct Link: <http://www.argusleader.com/story/news/2015/07/12/native-american-man-lead-rapid-citys-new-cultural-effort/30052051/>

Francis burnishes credentials on South America tour

Pope Celebrates Mass in Paraguay

ASUNCION, Paraguay (AP) — On his weeklong swing through South America, Pope Francis burnished his credentials as a new kind of pontiff, issuing a searing apology to indigenous people for church crimes more than a half millennium old and even making a pit stop at a Burger King to change clothes and freshen up before celebrating Mass.

The first Latin American pope picked three of the region's poorest countries — Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay — and used his speeches and homilies to hammer home themes that have become pillars of his papacy: respect for the poor and for the planet, and an impassioned call to turn away from what he sees as a cruel capitalist system that pillages the world's resources and heaps riches on the few.

They are messages Francis has been honing since becoming pope two years ago, but brought to life in vivid detail whether at Bolivia's notorious Palmasola prison, the mud-drenched Banado Norte slum in Paraguay or even a gathering of business leaders in Ecuador.

"We now know there is one Pope Francis, who says the same things whether he is in Italy, Asia or Latin America," said Massimo Faggioli, a Rome-based Vatican historian. "In Latin America, he was preaching to the choir, so the big challenge will now be to talk to and convince those who feel comfortable with the status quo."

Francis will get that chance in September, when he is scheduled to visit the U.S. capital right after a three-day stop in communist-run Cuba — two Cold War enemies whose recent rapprochement the pope played a personal role in.

The eight-day tour in South America was Francis' first to the Spanish-speaking part of his home continent since he became pope. He went to Portuguese-speaking Brazil soon after his election.



Pope Francis waves as he boards the plane back to Rome, in Asuncion, Paraguay, Sunday, July 12, 2015 ...

The highlight of this trip was undoubtedly in Bolivia, South America's poorest and most indigenous country, where Francis apologized for crimes committed by the church against indigenous peoples during the colonial-era conquest, going much further than any pope before him.

"I say this to you with regret: Many grave sins were committed against the native peoples of America in the name of God," he told a group of indigenous groups while combative President Evo Morales, the country's first indigenous president, looked on.

Morales said Francis' push to create a world where nobody is excluded makes him a fellow socialist. That idea was quickly batted down by theologians, and the pope himself seemed taken aback when Morales presented him with a gift of a crucifix shaped like a hammer and sickle, a symbol of communism.

An impromptu change of clothes in a Burger King bathroom provided a light moment amid a week of weighty issues. But it also showed how Francis is one of the most unusual pontiffs to lead the world's largest Christian denomination.

With hundreds of thousands of Catholic faithful waiting in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, Francis needed a place to don his vestments for Mass at the Christ the Redeemer square. So he popped into the fast food joint, then minutes later emerged to rail against consumerism during his homily.



Pope Francis arrives aboard the popemobile to a meeting with the young in Asuncion, Paraguay, Sunday ...

In each country on his trek, Francis spent time in marginalized neighborhoods, bringing a global spotlight to the crushing poverty that he says is too often ignored. He blamed capitalism, which he said is obsessed with the logic of profits to the exclusion of the needs of people and protection of the environment.

"This system cannot stand, it can't be endured by the peasants, it can't be endured by the workers, it can't be endured by communities, it can't be endured by the people nor can it be endured by the land," he said in a speech to the World Gathering of Popular Movements in Bolivia.

Juan Maria Carron, a Paraguayan sociology professor and church expert, said Francis is creating new expectations for how future pontiffs should act. "This pope is so different because he goes to the poor and really visits them."

Francis gave blessings and sometimes even bear hugs to the poor and sick throughout the trip. It was more than just spiritual fulfillment for many of the millions who came out to see him.

"The pope loves the poor and I am very poor," said Santa Cristina Rodriguez, a 67-year-old Paraguayan who attended a Mass that Francis celebrated in Caacupe, the country's most important pilgrimage site.



In this Wednesday, July 8, 2015 photo, Bolivian President Evo Morales presents Pope Francis with a c ...

Rodriguez, who has only three remaining teeth, said she has struggled to find work, so she recycles plastic and rummages through garbage cans to make ends meet. "Paraguayans are hard-working, but there are no jobs," she said. "Francis is bringing the country the blessings that it really needs."

All week, Francis showed his considerable political and people skills with crowd-pleasing statements that almost always came with an underlying message directed at the powerful.

In Ecuador, one of the world's most species-diverse nations, Francis told business leaders and indigenous groups that the Earth's natural resources are for everyone and must not be exploited by the wealthy few. The comments were clearly pointed at the OPEC country's dependence on oil extraction.

Using similarly blunt language in Paraguay, where graft is rampant, Francis called on political leaders to curb corruption — as President Horacio Cartes looked on.

As the fast-paced trip wrapped up, the 78-year-old pontiff looked tired and increasingly his comments were off the cuff. In some of those unscripted moments, he combined his critique of capitalism with unusually sharp words for the more than 1 billion Catholics worldwide. The message was clear: Even the flock doesn't get a pass.



People pray and sing before Pope Francis arrives to a meeting with the young in Asuncion, Paraguay, ...

While visiting the fetid Banado Norte slum in Paraguay hours before flying back to Rome, Francis said true Catholics don't just go to church or pray. Instead, he said, they must improve the lives of people in places like Banado Norte, where thousands live in shacks without running water or electricity.

If not, Francis said, "Your faith is weak, or it's sick or it's dead."

Direct Link: <http://news.yahoo.com/francis-burnishes-credentials-south-america-tour-040206468.html#>

More Festivals To Ban 'Native American' Headdresses Following David Guetta Video

[Peter Rubinstein](#) July 13, 2015

Two more music festivals have just been added to the list of those that will *not* allow attendants to bring in Native American war bonnets. First, Montreal-based [Île Soniq](#) took to Facebook to voice their opinion on the cultural disrespect of such clothing items. An issue that was [brought to the limelight](#) earlier today with **David Guetta**'s new, racially charged promotional video for his upcoming club residency.



[Heavy Montreal](#) and [Osheaga](#) has also decided to disallow headdresses from here on out.

Following the release, it seems that organizers have suddenly focused their cultural sensitivity toward Native Americans in an effort to cut down on outlandish and disrespectful festival attire. Hopefully, with time, we'll see an era where people just show up to a show dressed in shorts and a t-shirt.

Direct Link: <http://www.youredm.com/2015/07/13/more-festivals-to-ban-native-american-headdresses-following-david-guetta-video/>

Film drama 'Mekko' tells of Tulsa's Native American homeless, with many in key roles



Sterlin Harjo is the writer-director of “Mekko,” a drama he filmed in Tulsa that features a story surrounding the Native American homeless community in the city, with his performers interacting with a number of extras, many of whom are homeless and have ties to the Iron Gate soup kitchen in downtown Tulsa. Foxen

'Mekko'

What: Tulsa premiere of filmmaker Sterlin Harjo's third feature, shot in Tulsa and featuring many local landmarks and extras

When: 7 p.m. Saturday screening, with 6 p.m. meet-and-greet prior to the film; Q-and-A with filmmakers following the 1 hour, 27 minute movie.

Where: Circle Cinema, 10 S. Lewis Ave.

Tickets: \$10 for Circle Cinema members, \$20 for non-members, all proceeds to Circle Cinema Foundation; circlecinema.com or 918-585-3456 for more information.

'Mekko' the movie

"Mekko" was shot and produced by an all-Oklahoma crew and features prominent Tulsa landmarks, including Circle Cinema and the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood.

The film's world premiere occurred at the L.A. Film Festival, and it screened at Oklahoma City's deadCenter Film Festival in June.

The film's synopsis:

"'Mekko' paints the portrait of a homeless Native American parolee in Tulsa. As he struggles to find his way in the outside world after two decades behind bars, the titular Mekko discovers a chaotic yet occasionally profound and beautiful community of impoverished Natives which now includes Bunnie, one of his old

carousing buddies from his wilder youth. Though Mekko finds some peace in this society that exists on the fringes of our modern world, he also uncovers a darkness that threatens to destroy it from within. After a tragic series of events, Mekko dedicates himself to a quest for revenge which he believes will cleanse the sickness from this collective of marginalized individuals and perhaps atone for the sins that landed him in jail so many years ago."

Watch the trailer at tulsaworld.com/scene.

Posted: Tuesday, July 14, 2015 12:00 am | *Updated: 2:02 pm, Tue Jul 14, 2015.*

By MICHAEL SMITH World Scene Writer |

A thought comes to mind for many people upon seeing a homeless man or woman: What's that person's story?

Tulsa filmmaker Sterlin Harjo, the writer-director of Oklahoma-shot films including "Barking Water" and "Four Sheets to the Wind," is a natural storyteller.

A couple of years ago, when he was living in the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood, Harjo couldn't help but notice the homeless people who would congregate in the area.

As a member of the Seminole and Muscogee (Creek) nations, Harjo also noticed the prevalence of Native Americans among their numbers, forming a community that was almost a sort of family.

He went to work on a story, and the result is "Mekko," his third feature film, shot largely on the streets of Tulsa and premiering Saturday in the Kendall-Whittier area at the historic Circle Cinema.

"Mekko" is a work of fiction — a thriller about an ex-con's attempt to reintegrate into society and to live among Tulsa's Native American homeless — yet Harjo found reality for his story.

During 16 days of filming, in areas ranging from the downtown Coney Island to the 21st Street bridge underpass to Greenwood, actors worked closely with a number of homeless extras whom Harjo met at Iron Gate, a downtown soup kitchen.

They essentially became supporting actors in the film.

"I started seeing these people around Kendall-Whittier, and there were some obvious mental health and alcoholism issues among some, but there was also this type of family that chooses to live there, for a kind of freedom," Harjo said of his experience.

“I’d never seen something like that, and I found it interesting, and I tried to imagine how someone could end up there. That’s how the story started.”

“Mekko” (pronounced mee-ko) will screen at 7 p.m. Saturday at Circle Cinema, with a meet-and-greet set for 6 p.m.

Harjo and others from his film will take part in a question-and-answer session following the screening.

Tickets are \$10 for Circle Cinema members and \$20 for non-members. Harjo is donating all proceeds to the arthouse theater, which has premiered all of Harjo’s films and has been a mainstay in the neighborhood’s revitalization.

“It’s such a neat place, and honestly, without theaters like Circle Cinema, I wouldn’t be able to show my movie in Tulsa because it’s not like the big theaters show this kind of film,” the filmmaker said.

“So I think it’s very important to support a theater like that, a place where you can see films about our city and our people.”

Harjo has recently become a resident in the neighborhood again with a studio, Fire Thief, where he and photographer Jeremy Charles create commercials and direct video projects including “Osiyo, Voices of the Cherokee People,” the Cherokee Nation’s monthly TV news magazine.

Harjo said he is hoping to set up a screening at Iron Gate, the soup kitchen located inside Trinity Episcopal Church. He was inspired to meet with Iron Gate regulars after Connie Cronley, the nonprofit’s executive director, contacted him after viewing one of his short films.

“Iron Gate helped me a lot, and I felt it was important for the actors to hang out with people who really do know the streets; it made things real,” Harjo said, recalling first meeting with them and “recruiting them to come out and help us.”

“So many of them had these stories, and I told them my story that I wanted to tell, and they felt like it was real,” he said of his core group of about a dozen Iron Gate regulars.

“They helped me create the story. They would tell me things that I would incorporate into the story. Sometimes I’d just let the camera run while they talked.”

It was also a family affair, with “Mekko” co-starring Harjo family members including the director’s daughter, brother, uncle and cousin.

Native American stunt man Rod Rondeaux (“The Lone Ranger,” “Cowboys & Aliens”) was cast in the title role of Mekko, and Zahn McClarnon (a veteran Native American

actor seen in “Longmire” and “The Red Road”) plays Bill, a dark force in the homeless community.

Harjo has filmed in the Tulsa area before for his films, which have often been shown at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival. But “Mekko” is what he calls his “Tulsa story.”

“I always wanted to set a whole story in the city. There’s something cool and poetic about Tulsa,” he said. “I wanted to show the reality and the beauty and a dark side to the city, and I think it came out very cinematic.

“I think it makes Tulsa look very beautiful and interesting at the same time.”

Direct Link: http://www.tulsaworld.com/scene/movienews/film-drama-mekko-tells-of-tulsa-s-native-american-homeless/article_1e5f7219-18d6-56e9-87e3-2fb0bfe27118.html

No, Native Americans *weren’t* the original environmentalists

By [Naomi Schaefer Riley](#)

July 13, 2015 | 8:39pm



First lady Michelle Obama speaks to students in Washington. Photo: AP

It’s hard to make it through a US history textbook without coming across the silly claim that American Indians were the original environmentalists.

First lady Michelle Obama even repeated it at last week’s gathering of tribal youth. “Long before the United States was even an idea, your ancestors were harvesting the crops that would feed the world for centuries to come,” she said. “Today on issues like conservation and climate change, we are finally beginning to embrace the wisdom of your ancestors.”

Embracing the wisdom of your ancestors? Really? Has Mrs. Obama discovered some ancient Indian text that predicted the melting of the glaciers?

Sorry: There's little evidence that Indians had any fundamentally different understanding of the environment than any other people on Earth.

Which is to say, when resources were scarce, Native Americans worked to conserve them. When they weren't, they didn't.

Take, for instance, the oft-repeated notion that when Indians hunted, they would use every part of the dead animal — because of their concern for nature and their desire not to waste its treasures.

History doesn't back that up. In a 2002 article called "Buffaloed: The Myth and Reality of Bison in America," historian Larry Schweikart notes that some Indian tribes cleared large amounts of forest with "controlled burns" for hunting purposes.

They would divert game into small unburned areas in order to make it easier to hunt the animals.

As if that weren't bad enough from an "environmental" perspective, Schweikart says they "often got out of control, and without modern firefighting equipment, flashed through forests, destroying everything in their path. Deer, beaver and birds of all sorts were already on a trajectory to extinction in some areas, because over and above the hunting done by Indians, natural predators and disasters thinned herds."

Other hunting methods included the "buffalo jump," where a man would drive an entire herd over a cliff. As Schweikart notes, this "led to horrible waste and inefficient use of resources."

When buffalo were plentiful, they were hunted without regard to waste. When they weren't, things changed.

To the extent Native Americans cared about conservation, it was when they owned things. That's right: Despite the other huge myth about Indians — they're all socialists — many communities had clear ideas about private property.

"The popular understanding of indigenous culture is that it's almost like there was a socialist utopia for millennia," says Andre LeDressay, a scholar at the Fraser Institute in Canada, who has worked on economic development with First Nations there. As Le Dressay notes, "In any other circumstances such a society would have been impossible — unless you consider North Korea a success story."

Le Dressay notes that a lot of the literature on First Nations history and tradition was written in the '60s and '70s — a time when environmentalism and socialism were seeing a popular surge in the West.

Unfortunately, the result of all of these fantastical notions of Indian culture is the reinforcement of the reservation system.

In the name of protecting, we have kept them living on permanent artificial communes. There is little private property on reservations; education systems are in shambles. Crime runs rampant; poverty's widespread.

The largest reservations resemble nothing so much as the socialist "utopias" of the Third World.

Reservations began as a way to push Indians off their land and contain the threat of violence from them, but they've turned into a way of assuaging the white man's guilt about past atrocities: We pretend to be protecting their old way of life.

In her speech last week, Michelle Obama noted, "As we all know, America hasn't always treated your people and your heritage with dignity and respect; tragically, it's been just the opposite."

But treating Indians with dignity doesn't mean pretending they had special powers for predicting global warming.

Mrs. Obama assured the youth gathered: "You definitely have a first lady and a president who have your back." But that, too, is fiction.

Naomi Schaefer Riley's book on American Indians will be published in the spring by Encounter.

Direct Link: <http://nypost.com/2015/07/13/no-native-americans-werent-the-original-environmentalists/>

Meet the Teenage Indigenous Hip-Hop Artist Taking on Climate Change

Rolling Stone recently sat down with Xiuhtezcatl Martinez after his powerful speech at the United Nations

By [Coco McPherson](#) July 13, 2015



Xiuhtezcatl Martinez recently gave a speech on climate change at the U.N., partially in Spanish and Nahuatl. Tamara Roske

Recently, on the east side of Manhattan, there was a dignified gathering to discuss the end of the world. At the U.N.'s high-level event on climate change, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon criticized what he called the snail's pace of the last negotiations before the COP21 – the major climate conference coming up later this year in Paris. Anote Tong, the president of Kiribati, delivered a mournful report on the massive relocation of his drowning island nation.

And then, a relative unknown took the mic. Dressed in a donated suit, with dark hair skimming his waist, Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, the youth director of Earth Guardians, issued a brief prayer in both Spanish and the Nahuatl language. As befuddled U.N. staffers reached for headphones, seeking translation, he began an extemporaneous speech on the folly of climate dithering.

"I stand before you representing my entire generation," he said. "Youth are standing up all over the planet to find solutions. We are flooding the streets and now flooding the courts."

"We need you to take action. We are all indigenous to this earth."

When he finished just over nine minutes later, climate negotiators and representatives from nearly 200 countries had seen the face of America's next-generation environmental movement: a 15-year-old trilingual Indigenous hip-hop artist from Boulder who sits on Obama's youth council and who's already organized youth crews on six continents.

Rolling Stone recently spoke to Martinez about young people fighting climate change, his Aztec heritage and dancing to Kendrick Lamar.

You've talked about changing human consciousness around climate change. What does that mean?

We don't have to all stop using fossil fuels entirely and go live in the woods. That's not what this is at all about. It's about understanding — *seeing* — that the way we're interacting with the world is destroying the planet. We see the Earth as something we can

use, something we can take from — cut down the last forest, fish the last big fish in the ocean. There's a disconnect between the problem and the cause, because we don't want to admit to ourselves that we have created this catastrophe. To make that connection is tough. That's asking people to change the way they think. Which is tougher than asking people to change their light bulbs.

In your talks on the environment, you always mention your Aztec heritage and traditions, which you learned from your father. Explain what those are.

It's a really complex question; it's almost like trying to explain Christianity. The way I was raised, the Mashika people, the Aztec people of Mexico City, we share many of the same ideas and beliefs that Indigenous people around the world do: that sense of caretaking of the planet, that everything around us is a gift, and we have to protect it. That there's not one god, but everything around us has spirit, everything around us has an essence.

As soon as I could walk, I was learning the traditional dances, and as soon as I could talk I was learning the language, Nahuatl. Every dance was a different dance to honor a different spirit, every ceremony would open up calling to the four directions, letting them know that we were there because we were praying to them. It was a sense of beautiful, magical connection to the world around me. I looked at the mountains and the rivers and forests of Colorado and I saw that as my home. I belong to them more than they belong to me, which meant understanding that I had to protect them at any cost. That's where the activism came in.

We're tearing our world apart, destroying those things that make our world sacred. That thrust me into action. That passion told me there was nothing else that I could do but take action. It was a balance between what I got from my mother and what I got from my father.

Your mom, Tamara Roske, founded Earth Guardians in Hawaii in 1992. Was it a given that you'd become an activist?

My mother has been on the front lines of this movement for years. She's a warrior. I envy her ability to put everything aside and to fight for what's right. More than the activism, it's her power, her passion. A lot of kids don't have what I have. They didn't have the parents that I have, they didn't have the community that I have, the support that I have.

I learned so many valuable lessons from my mom that I could never have gotten anywhere else. Kids aren't raised thinking about how life can try to take us down, but that we can choose how to react to what people say and what people do. We choose our happiness, and true happiness is when we can truly accept everything that's going on, both good and bad, and deal with what we're given. I doubt many other children have been taught this. We don't have a lot — we're still struggling — but we do have a gift, a blessing. I never lose sight of that.

There's a school of thought that says the way we practice capitalism – this massive gorging consumption – is at the root of global warming.

We inherited this way of thinking from past generations: conquer the earth, take ownership of it, dominate it. Right now, the world doesn't see we're a part of nature, that when we cut down the rainforest or blow apart a mountain to get the coal inside, or when we drill the Arctic, that's tearing apart the only home we've got.

You're involved in using the [public trust doctrine](#) to fight climate change in the courts. Tell me about that.

I'm working with a group called Our Children's Trust on an effort to use atmospheric trust litigation. The public trust doctrine is a legal principle written a very long time ago and adopted and enforced by many states. It says that our natural resources – the air, the water, the earth – are to be protected for future generations, and it's the responsibility of leaders to do that. The climate is one of the most important resources – it belongs to no one and it affects everyone. So why don't we hold these leaders accountable for not protecting these resources?

So they filed these lawsuits and got youth representatives, youth plaintiffs, in all 50 states to take their state and federal governments to court for not protecting the public trust doctrine. We've won on different pieces of the legal arguments in states including New Mexico and Washington. Now we're working on another effort that would declare a global state of emergency around climate change. So there's a lot of forward momentum that's changing the game and getting more and more young people involved legally.

You write music and perform with your younger brother, Itzcuahtli. You've inspired him to be an activist. In 2014, he launched the Climate Silence campaign where he went on a six-week talking strike.

It's a powerful campaign. He said, "The whole planet is talking about climate change, debating whether it's real or not, and world leaders are doing squat. What would happen if we just shut up? If we just went silent?" He went silent for 45 days and the world paid attention. He reached over a million people, got hundreds of thousands of them to take vows of silence for an hour, a day, a week. He's the most social 11-year-old I know, constantly talking to random people on the street or friends in the coffee shop, having long conversations with them. He started the petition to get world leaders to take action on climate change. Then he realized there aren't any true world leaders – they're failing at their jobs. We are the leaders, the people are the leaders.



Xiuhtezcatl with his younger brother Itzcuahtli. Tamara Roske

The UNFCCC just chose your song, "Speak for the Trees," as a theme song for COP21. That's pretty incredible.

Music is a huge part of who I am, outside the activism. "Speak for the Trees" is off our new record, *Generation RYSE*. In the last couple of weeks, I was in the studio almost every day. I have a little setup where I produce beats, I make music and play keyboard. I've been working a lot of new stuff, continuing to play the piano and getting amazing artists to collaborate with. There's a lot on my summer to-do list.

What kind of music do you listen to?

I love Michael Franti – his older albums with Spearhead that were more radical, more lyrical. His old stuff was super inspiring. Tupac, Ludacris, Jurassic 5, Common. Nach from Spain is amazing, all his messages are pretty radical. I love Nahko Bear. I like to listen to a lot of conscious hip-hop – Akrobatik. I like a lot of EDM, trap. And modern hip-hop artists just for the music, for the beat, that are really good to dance to – Kendrick Lamar, Kanye West.

When we scheduled our original interview, you said you had dance practice.

I work on hip-hop dancing all the time, as much as I possibly can, incorporating choreography and stunts and all kinds of stuff into our show. I'm on a crew at a studio in my town. My best friend and I train together a lot. During the summer you have to work your butt off if you want to move up to the next crew level.

In developing your live performances, do you ever combine traditional Aztec dancing with hip-hop?

No. Aztec dancing is very different. It's very ceremonial, it's not entertainment. But I noticed that when I started picking up hip-hop, it was easier to pick up some of the dances. You know, picking up choreography that sticks in your brain.

After that insane week in Manhattan, do you have any desire to go on a talking strike, like your brother?

No, I wouldn't be able to survive.

Watch Martinez at home with his friends and family, talking about his passion for environmental activism and his Indigenous traditions, in this short film directed by Vanessa Black (a BLKFLM, ANCHOR LIGHT and Purpose production).

Read more: <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/meet-the-teenage-indigenous-hip-hop-artist-taking-on-climate-change-20150713#ixzz3g4LzESnY>

F* Me I'm Famous videos receive backlash from indigenous community**

Spanish nightclub being called out for racist images of First Nations women

By Kim Wheeler, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 14, 2015 4:36 PM ET Last Updated: Jul 14, 2015 5:39 PM ET



A still image taken from the Facebook page for F*** Me I'm Famous, illustrates how women in the videos were portrayed. (Facebook)

A nightclub in Spain is getting a lot of buzz from Canada on its Facebook page.

Videos that were released on July 1 to promote the F*** Me I'm Famous DJ shows featuring David Guetta at the Pacha nightclub in Ibiza, Spain, are being criticized for their racist and stereotypical images of indigenous women.

The scantily clad women in the video are shown wearing headdresses, face paint and other indigenous-inspired designs while doing "war whoops."

Ojibwe hip-hop artist Cody Coyote has started his own Facebook page called End F*** Me I'm Famous.



Cody Coyote is a hip-hop artist who started a Facebook group calling for an end to the F*** Me I'm Famous videos. (Nick Ghattas/Retro Season Photography)

"I started the group because after seeing the images and videos posted on their page, I felt offended," Coyote said in an interview.

"For this kind of stuff to exist, it makes me absolutely sick to my stomach, and it frustrates me knowing that some people think it's OK to do this kind of thing."

The Facebook page for F*** Me I'm Famous has generated swift backlash, with hundreds of comments against the videos.

Shenandoah Ellis-Umer, a Dakota woman, wrote, "You lost a fan David Guetta. I may be just one person but that's all it takes. And the last time I checked, I'm no ones mascot."

Shandra Spears Bombay, an Anishinaabe writer, wrote, "Hyper-sexualized (and in drag, I might add, because most of what those racist women are wearing are typically male garments), racist crap like this is exactly the kind of imagery that contribute to us being violated and killed."

Bombay is referring to the more than 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.

"The war bonnet is not the only way to represent leadership because we come from diverse nations, and although some indigenous women have worn the war bonnet or breastplate, it's not typically female attire," Bombay said in a followup interview.

"These people are dehumanizing and endangering both indigenous women and men with a single gesture," she added.

In recent years, there have been several calls by the public for people to stop wearing and selling faux headdresses. Headdresses are considered a sacred item by First Nations and only those who have earned the right to wear them are allowed.

Osheaga, a popular music festival in Montreal, just issued a ban on the wearing of headdresses.

"Osheaga asks fans and artists attending the festival to not use this symbol as a fashion accessory," the festival stated on its Facebook page.

Interview requests to David Guetta and Pacha nightclub went unanswered.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/f-me-i-m-famous-videos-receive-backlash-from-indigenous-community-1.3151636>

Move over Olympics, bring on World Indigenous Games



Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff (L) and the chief of the Terena ethnic group, Marcos, hold a ball made of palm leaves during the launch of the World Games of the Indigenous Peoples in Brasilia on June 23, 2015

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) -

Move over the Olympics. First, Brazil's hosting games for the world's indigenous tribes, featuring traditional arrow shooting and a little-known cousin of football.

As Rio de Janeiro gears up for next year's Summer Olympics, the city of Palmas in the Amazon jungle state of Tocantins is staging the World Indigenous Games from October 23 to November 1, the state tourism agency said Tuesday.

Twenty four Brazilian ethnic groups and another 22 from around the world will take part, the agency said in a statement.

One of the most intriguing events will be Xikunahity, otherwise known as head football, a South American tribal game where competitors play the ball with their heads.

Athletics and swimming are also featured, but archery -- long a hunting skill practiced in Latin America's jungles -- is likely to be hotly contested.

One indigenous youth, Dream Braga, has already made Brazil's national archery team after taking part in a program meant to encourage native bowmen to transfer their expertise at shooting fish and other animals to sport.

Direct Link: <http://www.france24.com/en/20150714-move-over-olympics-bring-world-indigenous-games>

Native Americans Get Shot By Cops at an Astonishing Rate

So why aren't you hearing about it?

—By [AJ Vicens](#)

| Wed Jul. 15, 2015 6:57 PM EDT



Students participate in a "die in" outside Colorado's state capitol in Denver in December 2014 as one of many nationwide in the wake of officer Darren Wilson shooting and killing Michael Brown in August 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri. The subsequent national conversation about police brutality in the US has largely ignored the suffering of the Native American community at the hands of police. Michael Rieger/ZUMA

Nearly 100 people demonstrated in downtown Denver earlier this week after police there [shot and killed 35-year-old Paul Castaway](#) on July 12. Police said the man was coming

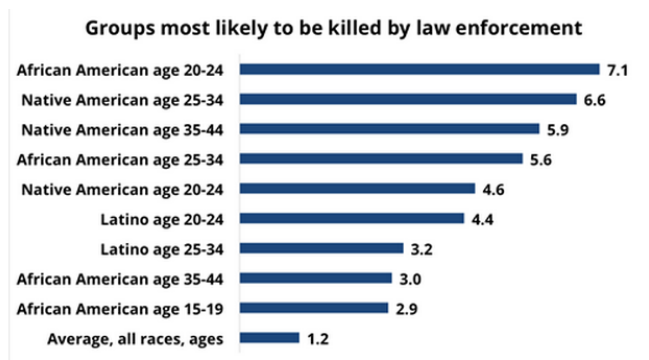
towards an officer with a knife, but his family and witnesses on the scene [dispute those claims](#) and say he was pointing the knife toward himself.

The shooting comes a little more than a month after two [Denver Police officers were cleared](#) in the shooting death of Jessie Hernandez, a 17-year-old girl killed in January when the officers fired into a stolen car she was supposedly driving toward them in an alley.

[According to his mother](#), Castaway struggled with schizophrenia and alcoholism. Witnesses say he was holding a knife to his own throat and didn't threaten officers, [according to the Denver Post](#). Castaway was shot four times and died later that night. Denver Police Department spokesman, Sonny Jackson, told the Post that the department is reviewing the incident, and that the officers involved will be named soon.

Castaway was a Lakota Sioux. His death brings up a rarely-discussed aspect of the ongoing conversation around police brutality in the United States: Native Americans are more likely than most other racial groups to be killed by police. [Indian Country Today](#) noted that [according to](#) the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, a nonprofit organization that studies incarceration and criminal justice issues, police kill Native Americans at a higher rate than any other ethnic group.

The center's analysis relied on data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Center for Health Statistics. It found that Native Americans, making up just .8 percent of the population, are the victims in 1.9 percent of police killings. When the numbers are broken down further, they reveal that Native Americans make up *three of the top five top age-groups killed by law enforcement:



Rate of law enforcement killings, per million population per year, 1999-2011.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics.

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice

"This is a reflection of an endemic problem in the perception of non-white people when it comes to the administration of justice," Chase Iron Eyes, an attorney with the Lakota People's Law Project in South Dakota, told *Mother Jones*. The group put out [a report called "Native Lives Matter"](#) in February discussing various ways the justice system disproportionately impacts Native Americans. He said the US Department of Justice

needs to address police violence against Native Americans and that Castaway's death is only the most recent example of the problem.

"You can tell they're shooting out of fear," he said. "If it's not out of hate, for some reason they're pulling the trigger before determining what the situation actually is. Something does need to happen. Somebody does need to take a look and we need help."

*An earlier version of this story incorrectly stated that Native Americans make up four of the five top age-groups killed by law enforcement. They actually make up three of the top five.

Direct Link: <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/07/native-americans-getting-shot-police>